A LITERARY MIDDLE ENGLISH READER

EDITED BY

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TO MY WIFE

ELIZABETH MERRILL COOK

WHOSE INSPIRATION AND HELP
HAVE MADE THIS BOOK POSSIBLE

PREFACE

Only two questions need to be satisfactorily answered in order to insure for Middle English literature a much larger place in college courses than it has hitherto occupied. These two questions are: Is the literature of this period worth reading? and, Can it be read without a learned apparatus so formidable as to constitute a serious deterrent? The first question I have endeavored to answer in the Introduction; and to the second my affirmative reply is indicated in the whole method I have followed.

This book, then, has been framed, not in the interest of grammar, or of dialectical study, or of lexicography, but of literary enjoyment and profit. It has been made somewhat copious, that those who desire only easier selections may be able to avoid the harder, that it may be possible to examine certain species and ignore others, and yet that the more comprehensive student shall have before him a fairly full conspectus of the literature as a whole. If I have not failed in my attempt, the texts included ought not to be much harder to read than if they were Elizabethan, and those who read them will be acquainting themselves with an earlier and no less important age.

Authorities vary with respect to the limits of the Middle English period, the variation as to the beginning being between 1100 and 1200, and as to the end between 1400 and 1500. Some scholars, such as Sweet, call the language between 1100 and 1200 Transition Old English, and that between 1400 and 1500 Transition Middle English. In this book Middle English is assumed to cover 1100–1500. In two instances, works only to be found in manuscripts of later date than 1500 are assigned, on what seem to the editor sufficient grounds, to the fifteenth century.

The classification here observed is according to literary species, and not according to dialect or chronology. The species of literature are, however, not so clearly delimited in Middle English as in

some other tongues, notably in Greek, so that the classification of certain pieces must be regarded as only approximative.

No separate vocabulary has been provided, and no separate body of notes. On each page the reader will find, it is hoped, what is essential for a sufficient understanding of that page; if this has entailed a certain amount of repetition, or what to some minds may seem excess, in the defining of words, it must be borne in mind that he who is able to read while running is not obliged to pause. The general introduction has been made brief. The prefatory notes to the various selections are longer or shorter, according to circumstances. The list of helpful books will enable the student to extend his inquiries in a variety of directions.

The editor has used his own judgment with respect to punctuation and capitalization, has normalized *i* and *j*, *u* and *v*, capitalized the first personal pronoun, and substituted 'Jesu' for the ordinary 'Jhesu' — which is due to a misapprehension. In the constitution of certain texts he has emended somewhat freely, but has always endeavored to supply the means of restoring the manuscript readings or the text of an earlier editor; where there is reason to suppose that the latter faithfully represents the manuscript, it has been referred to in the footnotes as 'MS.'

An effort has been made to give due credit in each specific case of indebtedness; if there has been any failure in this respect, it is involuntary.

If this book succeeds in making the Middle Ages seem more attractive, more clearly related to modern times, or more profoundly suggestive, the editor will be satisfied. To him Middle English literature helps to make England, not less real, but more visionary, in the sense of Kipling's lines:

> She is not any common Earth,
> Water or wood or air,
> But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye,
> Where you and I will fare.

SCHOLASTIKA, TYROL

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE LITERATURE

Mediæval European literature — at least if we except technical works and prose chronicles or histories — is characterized, in contrast with the ancient classics, by a certain expansiveness, resulting at times in an approach to garrulity. The author is not bent upon treating the matter in hand with the utmost economy, in order with the fewest possible strokes to achieve the finest proportions, the utmost simplicity, the most telling effect. The mediæval writer is more apt to be loose and desultory. At times he does not hesitate to be long-winded in description, discursive in the development of episodic reflection, tedious in the analysis of sentiment, or didactic in the enforcement of a moral. In all too few instances has he a sure sense of art — avoiding superfluity and digressions, and making straight for his goal. He employs repetition — for instance, in the refrain, or in the recurrent lines of the roundel; and, for the sake of rhyme, or to fill out a line, he will introduce conventional, almost meaningless, tags.

Vernacular writing in the Middle Ages was primarily addressed to the laity — to people who had not received the training of the schools, and who therefore were unaccustomed to strict sequences of thought, or to the measure and sobriety of perfect art. This may be clearly seen by the way in which translations are expanded — always excepting prose versions of the Bible and of some theological treatises. Chaucer,[1] in translating Boethius, uses three times as many words as the Latin verse, and more than twice as many as the Latin prose. The 38 words of Psalm 51. 1–3 [2] in the Vulgate are converted by a late Middle English paraphrast into 194. Such translations, being less compact than the originals, made fewer demands

[1] See pp. 394–5. [2] See pp. 402 ff.

upon the reader; he found them easier to follow, though his wits may have gone wandering before he reached the end.

Such absence of restraint may, according to circumstances, affect readers of to-day variously. Some things mediæval we may all find tedious, some things puerile; some things, on the other hand, simple, direct, and sweet—childlike, rather than childish. But take the pseudo-Mandeville,[1] for instance; is it easy to dismiss him with an epithet to which we should all assent? Is his book incredibly stupid —as much of it is certainly incredible—or is it always amusing? As easy to answer this, perhaps, as another question—is the compiler naïvely credulous, or is he an astute romancer? Perhaps neither the one nor the other, or rather both. Searching criticism reveals that some of his information rests on good authorities, and is true; other things are truth magnified and embellished by a purple mist; and still others are ancient poetry or fiction regarded as contemporary fact. His book is rambling, incoherent, uninstructive, if you will, but to some minds it is charming. *Piers Plowman* leads us nowhither, but on the road we drop in at a tavern, and the low life of England under the senile Edward or the adolescent Richard is as plain before us as that of Holland in a picture by Teniers or Jan Steen, so that we look and listen in spite of ourselves.

All this is Gothic, both in the sense that we recognize, and in that which appealed to our ancestors of the eighteenth century. It lacks restraint; it is flamboyant; it sins by excess; it seems to emphasize the detail, and neglect the *ensemble*; its gargoyles grin, no less than its saints aspire; it comprehends legend, poetry, and record of fact —but who shall say where legend ends and fact begins? On the other hand, it is rich, and varied, and alive; not all the forms are noble or beautiful, but most are interesting; and there is often science of structure when least suspected, though sometimes instinctive, sometimes empirical, and sometimes insufficient, like that which left the tower of Beauvais a heap of ruined stones.

And as Gothic borrowed something from Byzantine art, so there are Oriental elements in mediæval literature—not only such as are derived from the Bible and the primitive liturgies, but those tha

[1] See pp. 248 ff.

came in with pilgrim, merchant, and Crusader, visible more especially in tale and romance.

The Gothic cathedrals of the consummated Middle Ages succeeded, and in some sense grew out of, the earlier Romanesque, with its obvious, if somewhat oppressive, structure and solidity. The Romanesque church embodies the classic principles illustrated by the Roman arch and the Roman basilica, just as Augustine and Bede continue the Roman literary tradition. The latter have more moderation, more severity, than a Bonaventura or a Richard Rolle. The cathedral is more florid, more airy, more gorgeous with flaming color than the Romanesque church; but it is more crumbling, and tends more swiftly to decadence and overthrow. The simpler Gothic runs apace into the Flamboyant, and lo, before one can realize it, it has slid into the earlier Renaissance. So it is with literature; so it is with society. Beauty flowers for a moment out of strength; but pass by a few days later, and the blossom is faded, the glory departed.

Thus far, however, we have been disregarding certain works which appear even in the high mediæval period, but which differ notably from those that we have been attempting to characterize. They are works of measure and sobriety, like those of classic antiquity, rigorously planned; in them every line is structural, and you must read every line in order to be impressed by the magnitude, the logic, or the splendor of the whole. Of these the supreme type is the *Divine Comedy*. True, the *Divine Comedy* has been compared to a cathedral, not without reason; but the Gothic cathedral was never finished; many accretions to its original design might have fallen out otherwise; it did not represent a basic style, out of which others might in due course proceed; it was not, in the same sense as the Romanesque, grounded, massive, eternal. In all these respects Dante's poem might be compared to the earlier form. No one has been able to suggest an essential improvement in it; in itself, and through its outgrowths, it dominates all later European poetry of the chivalrous or 'romantic' temper. The lineaments of Beatrice swim before every ardent Christian lover, and Stephen Phillips can still write of Paolo and Francesca.

Why has Dante this power and this permanence? Partly because he was Dante — that is, a genius; but also because, by his own avowal, he placed himself under the tutelage of Virgil, and hence of Homer.

In a measure, the same thing is true of Boccaccio. His long-winded romances have not endured; but the *Decameron*, written with classic restraint and finish, has not only survived, but is still a model of prose. If we meet with comparatively little of this sort in Middle English, it is because the Renaissance began to exert its power much earlier in Italy than in England, or even in France.

But if we may expect few well-rounded wholes in Middle English literature, we must recognize that the poetic faculty, released from the strenuous and incessant task of watching over the complete organism at every step, is the more free to abandon itself at any moment to the full tide of occasional sentiment — comic, pathetic, tender, or wistful. A piece otherwise marred by imperfections may thus have lovely or poignant bits, so irresistible as to suffuse a glow over the composition as a whole, and blind our eyes to the faults which readily disclose themselves to reflection. And since, speaking broadly, the demands that we may make upon Middle English literature are restricted by considerations of form, it is with peculiar satisfaction that we now and then come upon a complete piece, as in Chaucer at his best, that endures the most searching trials, and yields unalloyed pleasure at every reperusal. But such encounters in Chaucer cause a deeper regret that so large a part of his writing is fragmentary, that his assignment of the several Canterbury tales to the personages of the pilgrimage is not always convincing, and that his greatest work, when viewed in the light of his own avowed plan, remains a torso.

To begin, and never to end, or to end only by stopping when fatigue or caprice dictates; to project what can never be compassed, or what is amorphous in its very conception; to reveal beauty only in glimpses, anon to be swallowed in convention or dulness — this it is to belong to the typical Middle Age, oppressed and glorified by its sense of the infinite, and seeing visions of starry brightness projected against a background of violence and fraud, of triumphant injustice

and unbearable oppression. The Crusades, the Hundred Years' War, typify in the world of action some of the literary and architectural phenomena that we have been attempting to describe — doomed to be abortive from their very nature, uninspired in many, perhaps most, of their particulars, but illumined by flashes of heroism and of generous sentiment, too fine to be steadily realized in the even course of a workaday world. In this respect the classic ideal, both of life and art, is more compassable, because more modest. Horace accomplishes what he undertakes more evenly, more uniformly, than Chaucer — yet shall I hesitate to say that some of us prefer Chaucer?

Whatever we may deny to our Middle English authors, in certain respects they are unrivaled. The wistfulness of regret for vanished glories, the sympathy with an outcast and bereaved wife, the mirthful interest in the mimic manhood of the barnyard, the joyous participation in the young life of the Maytime, the swift change by which the clowns and thieves of a Yorkshire moorside are transported to the Judean plains and the presence of the Divine Child in his sweet and touching innocence — these things have a perennial savor, a persistent appeal, even as the sorrows of Lear, the maiden grace of Miranda, the humors of Falstaff, or the piteous pleadings of Desdemona.

II. THE LANGUAGE

LETTERS

The letters are the same as in modern English (but see below) with the addition of ȝ (Ȝ), þ (Þ), and ð (Ð). Ȝ (from an old manuscript-form of *g*) is used for modern English *gh* (often before t) and for *y* (at the beginning or end of a syllable). Þ (*thorn*) and ð (*eth*, as in *weather*) represent *th*, and are used interchangeably with th and each other.

J is represented in the manuscripts by i, and *v* by u; so that, strictly speaking, j and v should be subtracted from the total number of letters. Y is very frequently used for i, and the two are virtually interchangeable as vowels.

PRONUNCIATION

There are two possible ways of pronouncing Middle English — one for quick understanding, the other for beauty. According to the first, one reads the text like so much modern English, at the same time converting the words, wherever possible, into their modern English forms. This answers sufficiently well in the case of prose, or of poetry written without much regard to metrical principles; but it should always be regarded as a makeshift, and, in the strict sense, as unscholarly. Perhaps the aptest apology for it would be found in our reading Shakespeare as modern English, in spite of the fact that to Shakespeare himself our modern pronunciation would, to a large degree, have seemed unintelligible or barbarous.

The second mode of pronunciation, essential to the just rendering f artistic verse, takes account of two things — strict metre, and the uite different values of certain letters, especially the vowels, from ose of modern English. By attending to these, much Middle nglish poetry may be made beautiful to the ear which otherwise

would sound commonplace or uncouth; and this result is worth the trouble involved.

The recognition of metrical technique in Middle English dep chiefly upon the pronunciation of final -e (besides -es, etc., in stressed positions). As a rule, final -e is always to be regarded forming a separate syllable; but before vowels, the commonest wo beginning with h, and occasionally elsewhere, it is silent. The s plest rule is this: In verse, always pronounce final -e (-es, et where it will conduce to the melody of the line, but suppress it the comparatively rare instances where it does not. Such -e's a always to be pronounced like the -*a* in *era* or *vista*. The -e of -ed -el, -en, -er is also to be suppressed when metre so requires.

Besides the final unstressed -e, there is also a *stressed* -e — often represented by -*y* in modern English; thus, cite (i.e. cité), *city*.

VOWELS

Short vowels are pronounced about as in modern English, but a nearly as *ah* (*never* like *a* in *hat*); o always rounded (produced with rounded lips; about like *aw*, but shorter), and *never* pronounced like *a* in modern *ah*; u as in *pull*, not as in *dull*. From the normal o is to be distinguished an o which is equivalent to u, and originally was u; it can be known by its always corresponding to the modern English *o* or *u* pronounced as *u* in *sun*: e.g. Middle English sonne, sone, love, etc. (OE. sunne, sunu, lufu, etc.), modern English *sun*, *son*, *love*, etc.

Long vowels are never pronounced as in modern English, but as in the European pronunciation of Latin, or approximately as in Italian, French, or German, thus:

a as in *father*	
e (ee) close as in *they*	o close as in *blow*
e (ee) open as in *there*	o open as in *broad*
i as in *pique*	u as in *rule*

Close and open e can only be discriminated by the student of Old English; close o is *oo* in modern English, open o being *o*, *oa*, etc. The double vowels, ee and oo, merely indicate long e and o, and are *never* to be pronounced as in modern English.

Diphthongs

The diphthongs **ei** and **ui** are to be pronounced like the first element followed by the second, and with the first element stressed. The remaining diphthongs are thus pronounced:

ai as in *aisle*
au (aw) as in *house* (Ger. *Haus*)
eu (ew) as in *few*
iu (iw) as in *few*
oi as in *boil*
ou (ow) as in *boor*, when *now* pronounced as in *out*, *cow*
ou (ow) as *ō* + *u* (nearly as *ō*), in all cases but the preceding

Consonants

c pronounced as *k* or *s*, under the same circumstances as in modern English; ci not = *sh*, but = *si* (modern Eng. *see*)
ch as in modern English, except before *t*, when it was pronounced like the *ch* in Ger. *ich* after *e*, *i*, or *y*, and like *ch* in Ger. *auch* after the other vowels
g as in *gold*, except occasionally as in *gem*; ght like cht (see above)
ȝ initial = *y*; ȝt like cht
h final sometimes like the ch of cht: sih, þurh
ht like cht
kn never like *n*, but = *k* + *n*
s like *z* between vowels, as in modern English
sch like *sh*
si not = *sh*, but = modern Eng. *see*
þ, ð like *th* (both sounds) in modern English
tu not = *chu*: na-tu-re
Double consonants before a vowel are always pronounced twice: renne = ren + ne; thridde = thrid + de

INFLECTION

NOUNS

The genitive singular and the plural regularly end in -(e)s (occasionally -is, -us; -(e)z); the dative in -e, or without ending. To such irregular plurals (identical with the singular) as occur in the Modern English *sheep, swine,* etc., add **hors**. Certain original feminines like **lady, halle, sonne**, sometimes retain the nominative form in the genitive singular; to these add the nouns of relationship, **fader, brother, moder**, etc., which, however, sometimes have **-s**. A few nouns of the Old English weak declension end in **-n** in the plural, like **been**, *bees*; **yen**, *eyes* (modern poetic *eyne*); **schoon**, *shoes* (modern poetic *shoon*), and are occasionally followed by others which more normally would end in -s (see, for example, Layamon).

ADJECTIVES

The plural and the dative singular of adjectives ending in a consonant are often formed by the addition of **-e**. When the adjective is preceded by the definite article, a demonstrative, or a possessive, **-e** is sometimes appended: **the grete honour; his white baner.**

PRONOUNS

The only forms which are not fairly self-explanatory are those of the feminine personal pronoun. The typical paradigm follows:

SING.	*N.*	**h(e)o; s(c)ho, s(c)he**
	G. } *D.* }	**hir(e), hur(e), her(e)**
	A.	**hi(e), hir(e), hur(e), her(e)**
PLUR.	*N.*	**h(i)e; thei, thai**
	G.	**her(e), h(e)or(e); their(e)**
	D. } *A.* }	**he(o)m, hi(o)m; the(i)m, tha(i)m**

The plurals of the personal pronouns of all genders are identical with those of the feminine. The genitive and dative singular of **hit**, *it*, are the same as those of the masculine: **his, him.**

Of the second person, ye is nominative; you, yow, dative and accusative.

Tho and thos(e) are independent demonstratives, each meaning *those*.

VERBS

The normal endings of the verb (disregarding the subjunctive) are:

IND. PRES. SING.	1.	-e
	2.	-est
	3.	-eth
PLUR.		-e(n)

	WEAK VERBS	STRONG VERBS
IND. PRET. SING. 1. 3.	-(e)de, -te	—
2.	-(e)dest, -test	-e, —
PLUR.	-(e)de(n), -te(n)	-e(n)

IMPER. SING.	-e, —
PLUR.	-e, -eth, —
INFIN.	-e(n), —; occasionally, -in, -yn
PRES. PART.	-ing(e); -inde (-ende, -and)
PAST PART.	-(e)d, -t (of weak verbs); -e(n), -n (of strong verbs)

The ind. pres. 3 sing. of a stem ending in -t or -d is often condensed to -t: thus, sit = sitth (for modern *sitteth*).

The following are the more important irregular verbs.

Conjugation of be(n), beo(n), *be*.

	INDICATIVE	SUBJUNCTIVE
PRES. SING.	1. be(o); am, æm; neg. nam	1. 2. 3. b(e)o, be, bi
	2. be(e)st; Northern es, is, bese; art, ert; with pers. pron. artu, artow; neg. nart	
	3. beth, beo(th); is, ys; Northern bes(e), es; neg. nis, nys	
PLUR.	beo(th), be(e)th, be(o)n, be(ne); Northern es, is; synd(en); ar(e)n, ern, are, ere	be(n)

PRET. SING.	1. 3. was, watz; neg. nas	wer(e), war(e)
	2. were	were
PLUR.	were(n), ware(n)	were(n)
IMPER. SING.	be(o)	INFIN. be(n), bene, beon
PLUR.	be(o)th	
PRES. PART.	beende, being(e)	PAST PART. (i)be(o)n, (i)be(o), bene

Conjugation of habben, have(n), *have.*

	INDICATIVE	SUBJUNCTIVE
PRES. SING.	1. (h)abbe, have	1. 2. 3. (h)abbe, have
	2. hafest, ha(ve)st; Northern havis, has(e), hatz; with pers. pron. hastow	
	3. habbeth, haveth, hath; Northern havis, has	
PLUR.	habbeth, haveth, have, han; Northern havis, has(e)	have(n)
PRET. SING.	1. 3. hafede, haved(e), hædde, had(d)e	1. 2. 3. [Like Ind. 1 and 3]
	2. hevedest, haddist; Northern hade	
PLUR.	hæfden, hadde(n), haveden	[Like Ind.]
IMPER. SING.	ha(f)e, have	INFIN. habben, haven, han
PLUR.	habbeth, haveth	
PRES. PART.	hæbbende, hafand, having(e)	PAST PART. (i)haved, (i)hafd, (i)had

Conjugation of go(n), ga(n), *go.*

IND. PRES. SING. 1. go, ga; 2. gost, gast, gest; 3. goth, gath; Northern gæth, gæs; PLUR. goth, gath, go(n), ga(n). PRET. eode, ȝeode, yede, yode, wente. PAST PART. (i)gan, (i)go(n), went.

Conjugation of cunne(n), conne(n), *know, be able.*

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. can(n), con(n); 2. canst, const; PLUR. cunne(n), conne(n), cunneth. PRET. c(o)uthe, cowthe, coude. PAST PART. c(o)uth.

Conjugation of ——, *may*, *must*.

PRES. SING. 1. 3. mot; 2. most(e); PLUR. mote(n). PRET. SING. 1. 3. most(e); 2. mostes(t); PLUR. moste(n).

(By the early fifteenth century, at latest, the preterit forms were also used as present.)

Conjugation of muȝen, mowe(n), *be able*, *be permitted*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. mai(ȝ), mey, may(e); 2. miht, maist; PLUR. maȝe(n), mawen, muȝe, muwe(n), mow, mowe(n). PRET. SING. 1. 3. mihte, mo(u)ht(e), myȝt; 2. mihtes(t); PLUR. mihte(n).

Conjugation of ——, *shall*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. s(h)al(l), schal(l); 2. s(c)halt; Northern sall; with personal pronoun shaltow; PLUR. s(c)hul(l)(en), sholen. PRET. s(c)holde, s(c)hulde; PLUR. s(c)holden, s(c)hulden.

Conjugation of willen, *will*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. wol(e), wulle, wil(l)(e); 2. wolt, wilt, wil(l); with personal pronoun woltow, wiltu; PLUR. wol(le)n, wol(e), wile(n). PRET. wolde; PLUR. wolde(n). PAST PART. wold.

Conjugation of wite(n), *know*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. wo(o)t; neg. not; 2. wo(o)st; with personal pronoun wostow; PLUR. witen. PRET. wiste; PLUR. wisten. PAST PART. wist.

PREPOSITIONS

Of is sometimes contracted to o, as in modern Eng. *o'clock*, and on to a, as in *aboard* = *on board*.

The Northern til is equivalent to *to*.

Th is assimilated to t in atte = *at the*.

DIALECTS

The dialects are Northern, Midland, and Southern, the first of these including also the language of the Scottish Lowlands. The most important dialect with reference to modern English is the East Midland, in whose district lay the two universities, and eventually London. Examples of the various dialects in this book are: Northern: Barbour, *The Bruce* (pp. 238 ff.); Southern: Layamon, *Brut* (pp. 219 ff.); Midland: *The Bestiary* (pp. 316 ff.).

Initial v for *f*, and z for *s*, are marks of the Southern dialect.

One of the commoner marks of the Northern dialect is a for *o* in words like bald, *bold*; gast, *ghost*; wa, *woe*. Others are: initial s for *sh*; k for *ch* (kirk, *church*). The Northern dialect has also a greater tendency to rid itself of inflectional endings and of final unstressed -e, has the present participle in -and(e) (Midland and Southern -inde, -ende, -inge), and to some extent has a peculiar vocabulary.

For fuller information about the dialects, see Emerson, *Middle English Reader*, 2d ed., New York, 1915, and Skeat, *English Dialects*, Cambridge (Eng.), 1911.

III. SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR THE STUDY OF MIDDLE ENGLISH

Literary History

BALDWIN, *Introduction to English Medieval Literature.* New York and London, 1914.

Cambridge History of English Literature, Vols. 1 and 2. Cambridge (Eng.) and New York, 1907, 1908.

JUSSERAND, *Literary History of the English People* (*from the Origins to the Renaissance*). New York and London, 1895.

KER, *English Literature: Medieval.* London and New York, 1912.

MORLEY, *English Writers*, Vols. 3–5. 2d ed. London and New York, 1889–1890.

SCHOFIELD, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer.* New York, 1906.

TEN BRINK, *Early English Literature* (*to Wyclif*). New York, 1889.

——, *History of English Literature* (*Wyclif, Chaucer, Earliest Drama, Renaissance*). New York, 1893.

——, *History of English Literature* (*from the Fourteenth Century to the Death of Surrey*). New York, 1896.

See also Wells, under Bibliographies.

Translations

PANCOAST and SPAETH, *Early English Poems.* New York, 1911.

RICKERT, *Early English Romances in Verse.* 2 vols. London, 1908.

SHACKFORD, *Legends and Satires from Mediæval Literature.* Boston, 1913.

WESTON, *Romance, Vision, and Satire.* Boston, 1912.

——, *The Chief Middle English Poets: Selected Poems.* Boston, 1914.

Chaucer

HAMMOND, *Chaucer: a Bibliographical Manual.* New York, 1908.

KITTREDGE, *Chaucer and his Poetry.* Cambridge, 1915.

LEGOUIS, *Geoffrey Chaucer*. New York, 1911.
ROOT, *The Poetry of Chaucer*. Boston, 1922.
TEN BRINK, *The Language and Versification of Chaucer*. London,
See also Wells, under Bibliographies.

MIRACLE-PLAYS

BATES, *The English Religious Drama*. New York and London, 1893
CHAMBERS, *The Mediæval Stage*. 2 vols. London, 1903.
DAVIDSON, *Studies in the English Mystery Plays*. New Haven, 1892.
GAYLEY, *Plays of our Forefathers*. New York, 1907.
TODDARD, *References for Students of Miracle Plays and Mysterie*
Berkeley (California), 1887.

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EINENKEL, *Streifzüge durch die Mittelenglische Syntax*. Münster i. W.,
1887.
MORSBACH, *Mittelenglische Grammatik*, Vol. 1. Halle, 1896.
See also Ten Brink, under Chaucer.

PROSODY

KALUZA, *Short History of English Versification*. London and New
York, 1911.
SCHIPPER, *History of English Versification*. Oxford, 1910.
See also Ten Brink, under Chaucer.

DICTIONARIES

RADLEY-STRATMANN, *Old English [Middle English] Dictionary*.
London, 1891.
ÄTZNER, *Altenglische Sprachproben: Wörterbuch*: A—Misbileven.
Berlin, 1878–1900.
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MIDDLE ENGLISH READER

ROMANCES

MALORY, MORTE DARTHUR

Sir Thomas Malory, knight, completed his romance, according to his own statement, between March 4, 1469 and March 3, 1470 (the ninth year of Edward IV). His home was at Newbold Revel, near Coventry, and five and a half miles northwest of Rugby, where he succeeded his father in 1433 or 1434. He was member of Parliament for Warwickshire in 1445, and died March 14, 1470 (according to Kittredge, *Harvard Studies* 5. 88 ff.). His book is mostly derived from a variety of French sources, though he occasionally adapts English poems. Whether the ultimate French originals had been digested into a single work which served as Malory's source has not been determined. The *Morte Darthur* was published by Caxton in 1485, and it is from Sommer's literal reprint that our text is derived.

For the characterization of this romance we may borrow a few sentences from Andrew Lang (*Le Morte Darthur*, ed. Sommer, pp. xiv–xxi): 'There is no more strange fortune in literature than that which blended wild Celtic myths, and a monastic theory of the saintly life, with all of chivalrous adventure, with all of courtesy and gentleness that the Middle Ages could conceive, and handed it on to be the delight of the changing ages. . . . Malory has penned the great and chief romance of his own age and of ours, the story that must endure and must move the *lacrymæ rerum* till man's nature is altered again. . . . The Celtic legends, passed through the French mind, and rendered in Malory's English, have, what Homer lacks, the charm of mystery and distance, the background of the unknown. . . . Malory's book is a very complete and composite picture of a strangely inherited ideal; it is, indeed, "a jumble," but, of all jumbles, the most poetic and the most pathetic. . . . Malory is skilled "to teach men unto strange adventures," to instruct in all courage, chastity, endurance, and true love, nor can we estimate what his influence must have been in training the fathers of Elizabeth's Englishmen. . . . The style of Malory is, of course, based on the fresh and simple manner of his French originals. For an English style of his age, it is particularly fluent. . . . Perhaps it is just because he does follow a French copy, and so is familiar with words derived from the Latin, that Malory possesses his fluency and facility. . . . The manner and matter of Malory make him the most generally known of all old authors, except, of course, the translators of the Bible.'

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Book 18, chaps. 18–20. Based upon the French prose romance of *Lancelot* (first half of the thirteenth century), and the fourteenth-century *Morte Arthur* contained in Harleian MS. 2252 of the British Museum (edited by Bruce for the E. E. T. S.; see also Hemingway's edition, Boston, 1912); but chapter 20 is almost wholly due to Malory. For details concerning the relation of our passage to the French *Lancelot*, see Sommer 3. 10, 222–8, 250; for the text of the OF. original, see *Mort Artu*, ed. Bruce, pp. 74 ff. For the general subject of Lancelot, see Jessie L. Weston's *The Legend of Lancelot du Lac* (London, 1901).

Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* and *Lancelot and Elaine* are founded on Malory.

And so upon a morne they took their horses, and Elayne le Blank with them; and whan they came to Astolat, there were they we lodged, and had grete chere of Syre Bernard the old baron, and o Sir Tyrre his sone. And so upon the morne, whan Syr Launcelo shold[1] departe, fayre Elayne brouȝt her fader with her, and Si Lavayne and Sir Tyrre, and thus she said: 'My lord Syr Launcelot now I see ye wylle departe, now, fayre knyghte and curtois knyghte have mercy upon me, and suffer me not to dye for thy love.' 'Wha wold ye that I dyd?' said Syr Launcelot. 'I wold have you to my husbond,' sayd Elayne. 'Fair damoysel, I thanke yow,' sayd Sy Launcelot, 'but truly,' sayd he, 'I cast[2] me never to be wedde man.' 'Thenne, fair knyght,' said she, 'wylle ye be my peramour?' 'Jesu defende me,' said Syr Launcelot, 'for thenne I rewarded your fader and your broder ful evylle for their grete goodenes 'Allas,' sayd she, 'thenne must I dye for your love.' 'Ye shal no so,' said Syre Launcelot, 'for wete[5] ye wel, fayr mayden, I myght have ben maryed and[6] I had wolde,[7] but I never applyed me to b maryed yet. But by cause,[8] fair damoysel, that ye love me as y saye ye doo, I wille, for your good wylle and kyndenes, shewe yo somme goodenes, and that is this: that w[h]eresomever ye will beset[9] youre herte upon somme goode knyghte that wylle wedd yow, I shalle gyve yow togyders[10] a thousand pound yerely, to yo

[1] was to, was about to
[2] intend (*NED*. 44. b)
[3] paramour, illicit lover
[4] should reward (subj.)
[5] wit, know
[6] if
[7] willed, wished
[8] because
[9] set, place
[10] together

and to your heyres. Thus moche will I gyve yow, faire madame, for your kyndenes, and alweyes whyle I lyve to be your owne knyghte.' 'Of alle this,' saide the mayden, 'I wille none, for, but-yf[1] ye wille wedde me, or ellys be my peramour at the leest, wete yow wel, Sir Launcelot, my good dayes are done.' 'Fair damoysel,' sayd Sir Launcelot, 'of these two thynges ye must pardonne me.' Thenne she shryked[2] shyrly,[3] and felle doune in a swoune; and thenne wymmen bare her into her chamber, and there she made overmoche sorowe. And thenne Sir Launcelot wold departe; and there he asked Sir Lavayn what he wold doo. 'What shold I doo,' said Syre Lavayne, 'but folowe yow, but-yf ye dryve me from yow, or commaunde me to goo from yow?' . . .

Thenne Sir Launcelot took his leve, and soo they departed, and came unto Wynchestre. And whan Arthur wyste[4] that Syr Launcelot was come, hole[5] and sound, the kynge maade grete joye of hym, and soo dyd Sir Gawayn, and all the knyztes of the Round Table excepte Sir Agravayn and Sire Mordred. Also Quene Guenever was woode[6] wrothe with Sir Launcelot, and wold by no meanes speke with hym, but enstraunged[7] herself from hym, and Sir Launcelot made alle the meanes that he myght for to speke with the quene, but hit wolde not be.

Now speke we of the fayre mayden of Astolat, that made suche sorowe daye and nyght that she never slepte, ete, nor drank; and ever she made her complaynt unto Sir Launcelot. So when she had thus endured a ten dayes, that she febled so[8] that she must nedes passe out of thys world, thenne she shryved[9] her clene, and receyved her Creatoure.[10] And ever she complayned stylle upon Sire Launcelot. Thenne her ghoostly[11] fader bad her leve suche thoughtes. Thenne she sayd: 'Why shold I leve suche thoughtes? Am I not an erthely woman? And alle the whyle the brethe is in my body I may complayne me, for my byleve is I doo none offence though I love an erthely man, and I take God to my record I loved none but Sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall; and a clene mayden I am for

[1] unless
[2] shrieked
[3] shrilly
[4] knew
[5] This is direct from OE. *hāl*
[6] mad(ly)
[7] estranged
[8] grew so weak
[9] confessed and received absolution
[10] the sacrament
[11] spiritual

hym and for alle other. And sythen[1] hit is the sufferaunce[2] of God that I shalle dye for the love of soo noble a knyghte, I byseche the hyghe Fader of heven to have mercy upon my sowle, and [that] myn innumerable paynes that I suffred may be allygeaunce[3] of parte of my synnes. For swete Lord Jesu,' sayd the fayre mayden, 'I take the to record, on the[4] I was never grete offenser ageynst thy lawes, but that I loved this noble knyght Sire Launcelot out of mesure, and of myself, good Lord, I myght not withstande the fervent love wherfor[5] I have my dethe.' And thenne she called her fader Sire Bernard, and her broder Sir Tyrre, and hertely she praid her fader that her broder myght wryte a letter lyke as she did endyte hit; and so her fader graunted her. And whan the letter was wryten word by word lyke as she devysed, thenne she prayd her fader that she myght be watched untyl she were dede. 'And whyle my body is hote,[6] lete this letter be putt in my ryght hand, and my hande bounde fast with the letter untyl that I be cold, and lete me be putte in a fayre bedde, with alle the rychest clothes that I have aboute me, and so lete my bedde and alle my rychest clothes be laide with me in a charyot unto the next place where Temse[7] is, and there lete me be putte within a barget,[8] and but one man with me, suche as ye trust to stere me thyder, and that my barget be covered with blak samyte,[9] over and over. Thus, fader, I byseche yow, lete hit be done.' Soo her fader graunted hit her feythfully, alle thynge shold be done lyke as she had devysed. Thenne her fader and her broder made grete dole,[10] for, when this was done, anone[11] she dyed. And soo whan she was dede, the corps, and the bedde, alle was ledde the next way unto Temse, and there a man, and the corps, and alle, were put into Temse, and soo the man styred[12] the barget unto Westmynster, and there he rowed a grete whyle to and fro or[13] ony aspyed hit.

Soo by fortune Kynge Arthur and the Quene Guenever were spekynge togyders at a wyndowe; and soo as they loked into Temse, they aspyed this blak barget, and hadde merveylle what it mente. Thenne

[1] since (<sithens, sithence)
[2] permission
[3] alleviation
[4] toward thee
[5] because of which
[6] hot, warm
[7] Thames
[8] barge
[9] samite, rich silk
[10] lamentation
[11] immediately (in one, i.e. minute)
[12] steered
[13] ere, before

he kynge called Sire Kay, and shewed hit hym. 'Sir,' said Sir Kay, wete you wel there is some newe tydynges.' 'Goo thyder,' sayd the kynge to Sir Kay, 'and take with yow Sire Brandyles and Agravayne, and brynge me redy word what is there.' Thenne these four knyghtes departed, and came to the barget, and wente in; and there they fond the fayrest corps lyenge in a ryche bedde, and a poure man sittyng in the bargets ende, and no word wold he speke. Soo these foure knyghtes retorned unto the kyng ageyne, and told hym what they fond. 'That fayr corps wylle I see,' sayd the kynge. And soo thenne the kyng took the quene by the hand, and went thydder. Thenne the kynge made the barget to be holden fast; and thenne the kyng and the quene entred, with certayn knyghtes wyth them. And there he sawe the fayrest woman lye in a ryche bedde, coverd unto her myddel with many ryche clothes, and alle was of clothe of gold, and she lay as though she had smyled. Thenne the quene aspyed a letter in her ryght hand, and told it to the kynge. Thenne the kynge took it, and sayd: 'Now am I sure this letter wille telle what she was, and why she is come hydder.' Soo thenne the kynge and the quene wente oute of the barget, and soo commaunded a certayne[1] wayte upon the barget. And soo whan the kynge was come within his chamber, he called many knyghtes aboute hym, and saide that he wold wete openly what was wryten within that letter. Thenne the kynge brake it, and made a clerke[2] to rede hit; and this was the entente[3] of the letter: 'Moost noble knyghte, Sir Launcelot, now hath dethe made us two at debate for your love; I was your lover, that men called the fayre mayden of Astolat; therfor unto alle ladyes I make my mone; yet praye for my soule, and bery me atte leest, and offre ye my masse-peny.[4] This is my last request. And a clene mayden I dyed, I take God to wytnes. Pray for my soule, Sir Launcelot, as thou art pierles.[5]' This was alle the substance in the letter. And whan it was redde, the kyng, the quene, and alle the knyghtes wepte for pyte of the doleful complayntes. Thenne was Sire Launcelot sente for. And whan he was come, Kynge Arthur made the letter to be redde to hym; and whanne Sire Launcelot herd hit word by word, he sayd: 'My lord

1 certain person (or persons)
3 meaning, substance
4 funeral dues
5 peerless

Arthur, wete ye wel I am ryghte hevy[1] of the dethe of this fair damoysel. God knoweth I was never causer of her dethe by my wyllynge, and that wille I reporte me[2] to her own broder; here he is, Sir Lavayne. I wille not saye nay,' sayd Syre Launcelot, 'but that she was bothe fayre and good, and moche I was beholden unto her, but she loved me out of mesure.' 'Ye myght have shewed her,' sayd the quene, 'somme bounte and gentilnes, that myghte have preservec her lyf.' 'Madame,' sayd Sir Launcelot, 'she wold none other waye be ansuerd, but that she wold be my wyf, outher[3] els my peramour and of these two I wold not graunte her; but I proferd her, for he good love that she shewed me, a thousand pound yerly to her and t her heyres, and to[4] wedde ony manere knyghte[5] that she coude fynd best to love in her herte. For, madame,' said Sir Launcelot, 'I lov not to be constrayned to love; for love muste aryse of the herte, an not by no constraynte.' 'That is trouth,' sayd the kynge, and man knyghtes; 'love is free in hymselfe, and never wille be bounden, fo where he is bounden he looseth hymself.' Thenne sayd the kyng unto Sire Launcelot: 'Hit wyl be your worshyp[6] that ye oversee that she be entered[8] worshypfully.' 'Sire,' sayd Sire Launcelot, 'tha shalle be done as I can best devyse.' And soo many knyghtes yede thyder to behold that fayr mayden. And soo upon the morne sh was entered rychely, and Sir Launcelot offryd her masse-peny, an all the knyȝtes of the Table Round that were there at that tyme offry with Syr Launcelot. And thenne the povre man wente ageyne wit the barget. Thenne the quene sente for Syr Launcelot, and pray hym of mercy,[10] for why[11] that she had ben wrothe with hym causele 'This is not the fyrste tyme,' said Sir Launcelot, 'that ye have be displeasyd with me causeles; but, madame, ever I must suffre yov but what sorowe I endure I take no force.'[12]

1 sorrowful
2 refer (by way of appeal)
3 or
4 that she might
5 of knight (for an explanation see *NED.* s.v. *kin*, 6.b)
6 to your credit
7 provide
8 interred
9 went
10 besought his pardor
11 because
12 I do not mind

and unto Governaile, a drynke, and charged them that what day Kynge Marke shold wedde, that same daye they shold gyve hym that drynke, soo that Kynge Marke shold drynke to La Beale Isoud; 'and thenne,' said the quene, 'I undertake eyther shalle love other the dayes of their lyf.' Soo this drynke was yeven unto Dame Bragwayne and unto Governaile. And thenne anone Syre Trystram tooke the see and La Beale Isoud; and whan they were in theire caban, hit happed soo that they were thursty, and they sawe a lytyl flacke[t][1] of gold stande by them, and hit semed by the coloure and the taste that it was noble wyn. Thenne Sire Trystram toke the flacke[t] in his hand, and sayd: 'Madame Isoud, here is the best drynke that ever ye drank, that Dame Bragwayne youre mayden, and Governayle my servaunt, have kepte for themself.' Thenne they lough and made good chere, and eyther dranke to other frely, and they thoughte never drynke that ever they dranke to other was soo swete nor soo good. But by that[2] theyr drynke was in their bodyes, they loved eyther other so wel that never theyr love departed, for wele neyther[3] for wo. And thus it happed the love fyrste betwixe Sire Tristram and La Beale Isoud, the whiche love never departed the dayes of their lyf.

THE QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL: THE VOW

Book 13, chaps. 6–7. This comes from *La Queste del Saint Graal* (edited by Furnivall for the Roxburghe Club, London, 1864); see Sommer 3. 206, 209, 210. With the second and third paragraphs of this extract may be compared Tennyson, *Holy Grail* 182 ff., 314 ff.

'Now,' sayd the kyng, 'I am sure at this quest of the Sancgreal shalle alle ye of the Table Rounde departe, and never shalle I see yow ageyne hole togyders; therfor I wille see yow alle hole togyders in the medowe of Camelot, to juste and to torneye, that after your dethe men maye speke of hit, that suche good knyghtes were holy[4] togyders suche a day.' As unto that counceyll, and at the kynges request, they accorded alle, and toke on their harneis[5] that longed[6] unto justynge.

[1] flask
[2] by the time
[3] nor
[4] wholly
[5] armor
[6] belonged

But alle this mevynge[1] of the kyng was for this entent, for to see Galahalt preved,[2] for the kynge demed[3] he shold not lyghtly[4] come ageyne unto the courte after his departynge. So were they assembled in the medowe, bothe more and lasse.[5] Thenne Syr Galahalt, by the prayer of the kynge and the quene, dyd upon hym a noble jesseraunce, and also he dyd on[6] hys helme, but shelde wold he take none for no prayer of the kyng. And thenne Sir Gawayne and other knyghtes prayd hym to take a spere. Ryghte soo he dyd; and the quene was in a toure with alle her ladyes for to behold that turnement. Thenne Sir Galahalt dressid hym[7] in myddes[8] of the medowe, and began to breke speres merveyllously, that all men had wonder of hym, for he there sormounted[9] alle other knyȝtes, for within a whyle he had defouled[10] many good knyghtes of the Table Round sauf[11] tweyne, that was Syr Launcelot and Sire Percyvale.

Thenne the kyng, at the quenes request, made hym to alyghte and to unlace his helme, that the quene myȝt see hym in the vysage. Whanne she beheld hym, she sayd: 'Sothely,[12] I dar wel say that Sir Launcelot begat hym, for never two men resembled more in lykenes, therfor it nys no merveyle though he be of grete prowesse.' So a lady that stode by the quene said: 'Madame, for Goddes sake, oughte he of ryghte to be so good a knyghte?' 'Ye,[13] forsothe,' said the quene, 'for he is of alle partyes[14] come of the best knyghtes of the world, and of the hyhest lygnage[15]; for Sir Launcelot is come but of the eighth degre from oure Lord Jesu Cryst, and Syre Galahalt is of the nynthe degree from oure Lord Jesu Cryst: therfor I dar saye they be the grettest gentilmen of the world.' And thenne the kynge

[1] suggestion (moving)
[2] proved, tried
[3] supposed
[4] readily
[5] less
[6] put on, cf. *endo*
[7] made ready
[8] the midst
[9] surpassed
[10] trodden down, overthrown
[11] save, except
[12] in truth
[13] yea
[14] in all respects
[15] lineage

5. **Jesseraunce**: more correctly, *jazerant*, a word of Saracenic origin (found in the name *Algiers*), occurring in OF. in the *Chanson de Roland*; it signifies (*NED.*): 'A light coat of armor, composed of splints or small plates of metal riveted to each other, or to a lining of some stout material.' Scott (*Quentin Durward*) calls it a 'flexible shirt of linked mail.'

24. **Cryst**: 'the first true gentleman that ever breathed' (Dekker). The sentence, from 'for Sir Launcelot' to 'world,' is original with Malory.

and al estates[1] wente home unto Camelot, and soo wente to evensonge to the grete mynster. And soo after upon that to souper, and every knyȝt sette in his owne place as they were toforehand. Thenne anone they herd crakynge and cryenge of thonder, that hem thought the place shold alle todryve.[2] In the myddes of this blast entred a sonne beaume more clerer by seven tymes than ever they sawe daye, and a they were alyghted of the grace of the Holy Ghoost. Thenne beganne every knyghte to behold other, and eyther sawe other by theire semynge fayrer than ever they sawe afore. Not for thenne[3] there was no knygh myghte speke one word a grete whyle, and soo they loked every mai [o]n other, as they had ben dome.[4] Thenne ther entred into the hall the Holy Graile, coverd with whyte samyte, but ther was none myght see hit, nor who bare hit. And there was al the halle fulfylled[5] wit good odoures, and every knyȝt had suche metes and drynkes as h best loved in this world. And whan the Holy Grayle had be[6] born thurgh the halle, thenne the holy vessel departed sodenly, that the wyste not where hit becam.[7] Thenne had they alle brethe to speke And thenne the kynge yelded[8] thankynges to God of his good grac that he had sente them. 'Certes,' said the kynge, 'we oughte t thanke oure Lord Jesu gretely, for that he hath shewed us this daye atte reverence of this hyhe feest of Pentecost.' 'Now,' said Sir Gawayn 'we have ben served this daye of what metes and drynkes we thought on, but one thynge begyled us — we myght not see the Holy Grayl it was soo precyously coverd; wherfor I wil make here avowe[9] tha to-morne,[10] withoute lenger[11] abydyng,[12] I shall laboure in the ques of the Sancgreal, that I shalle hold me oute a twelvemoneth and day, or more yf nede be, and never shalle I retorne ageyne unto th courte tyl I have sene hit more openly than hit hath ben sene here and yf I may not spede,[13] I shall retorne ageyne, as he that maye n be ageynst the wil of our Lord Jesu Cryste.' Whan they of th Table Round herde Syr Gawayne saye so, they arose up the mo party,[14] and maade suche avowes as Sire Gawayne had made.

1 ranks, degrees
2 burst asunder
3 nevertheless
4 dumb
5 filled
6 been
7 went
8 gave
9 vow
10 to-morrow
11 longer
12 delay
13 succeed
14 most part, greater numb

Anone as Kynge Arthur herd this, he was gretely dyspleasyd, for he wyste wel they myghte not ageynesaye[1] theyre avowes. 'Allas!' said Kynge Arthur unto Sir Gawayn, 'ye have nyghe slayne me with the avowe and promesse that ye have made. For thurgh yow ye have berafte[2] me the fayrest felauship and the truest of knyghthode that ever were sene togyders in ony realme of the world. For whanne they departe from hens, I am sure they alle shalle never mete more in thys world, for they shalle dye many in the quest. And soo it forthynketh[3] me a lytel, for I have loved them as wel as my lyf.'

KING HORN

The romance probably antedates 1250; the Cambridge manuscript (1530 lines), here followed, may be dated about 1310. The best edition is by Joseph Hall (Oxford, 1901).

The story is of a prince, who, set adrift by conquering Saracens, lands in Westernesse, is loved by the king's daughter of that country, is banished when his love is discovered, returns in time to save her from another marriage, wins her for himself, and finally becomes king of his native land.

According to Hall (pp. lii–lvi): '*King Horn* is essentially English, a plain impersonal tale, picturing a simple state of society, and full of primitive touches centuries older than its language, written in a metre which is a natural development of Old English prosody. . . . [The] poem, as we have it, is a story of the Danish raids on the south coast of England. It is, in the main, Teutonic in spirit and details: the names of the persons and places are mostly Teutonic, or assimilated to Teutonic forms. . . . Rimenhild and Aylmar, and his court on the banks of the Dorsetshire Stour, are English additions to the original story, and the real Westernesse is Ireland. Then all the localities and surroundings are Celtic. Murry . . . is king of Suddene, the country of the Southern Damnonii, that is, of Cornwall. . . . The banished Horn finds shelter at the court of an Irish king; with Irish troops, and accompanied by an Irish page, he recovers his father's kingdom. His rival is a Breton prince, Modi, king of Renns. These indications point to the conclusion that the story is originally a British tradition, arising out of some temporary success in which the Cornish, aided by the Irish, checked the westward progress of the English invader. It was annexed by some English poet, and recast to suit the similar position of his countrymen resisting the attacks of the Danes. Finally, it emerged at a much later date in the shape of the extant versions, under the impulse of the rising spirit of the English people recovering from the Norman Conquest, which found its peculiar literary expression in a whole cycle of outlaw and exile stories in verse and prose.

[1] retract, break [2] bereft, deprived (with two accusatives) [3] grieves

'The literary interest of *King Horn* may be characterized in few words. It is probably the earliest of the English romances, but as a specimen of the purely narrative sort it has great merit. In swift succession of brief and incisive speeches it tells a simple story effectively, without distraction of elaborate description or reflective comment. But the characters are very simply conceived, the female element is slight, and lovemaking is quite subordinate to fighting. Although picturesque and even poetic situations, such as Horn's farewell to his boat, are not wanting, the language is bald and unimaginative. A certain epic simplicity and energetic directness of expression, to which the short verse lends itself, are the main merits of its style.'

Our extract runs from line 445 to line 586. The earlier course of the story is as follows: Saracens kill King Murry of Suddene, and set adrift the young prince, Horn, and his companions. The latter are carried over the water to Westernesse, where King Aylmar receives them kindly, and bids the steward Athelbrus teach Horn the arts of harping and song, and train him to serve the wine and carve at table. Horn is soon loved by all the court, but especially by the king's daughter, Rymenhild. She bids the steward bring him to her chamber, but Athelbrus, in dread of the king's anger, brings instead Horn's companion, Athulf. To Athulf she gives her love, supposing him to be Horn, but Athulf finally explains the mistake, and she upbraids the steward. Athelbrus again promises to bring Horn, and this time really does so. Rymenhild declares her love to Horn, and offers to marry him. He gently declines, on the ground that he is unworthy by birth for the honor, whereupon she swoons. Horn is moved by her grief, and suggests that marriage might be possible if he were a knight.

Rymenhild, þat swete þing,
Wakede of hire swoȝning.[1]
'Horn,' quaþ[2] heo,[3] 'wel[4] sone[5]
Þat schal beon[6] idone[7]:
Þu schalt beo[8] dubbed kniȝt
Are[9] come seve[10] niȝt.
Have her[11] þis cuppe,
And þis ryng þeruppe[12]
To Aylbrus þe[13] stuard,
And se[14] he holde foreward.[15]

[1] swoon
[2] quoth, said
[3] she
[4] very; MS. vel
[5] soon
[6] be
[7] done (OE. *gedōn*)
[8] be
[9] before
[10] seven
[11] here
[12] thereupon, in addition
[13] MS. &
[14] see (that)
[15] keep his promise

7. **Have**: the Harleian and Laud MSS. have here a word for 'take.'

Seie[1] Ihc him biseche
Wiþ loveliche[2] speche
Þat he adun[3] falle
Bifore þe king in halle,
And bidde þe king ariȝte[4]
Dubbe þe to kniȝte.
Wiþ selver and wiþ golde
Hit wurþ[5] him wel iȝolde.[6]
Crist him lene[7] spede[8]
Þin erende[9] to bede.'[10]
   Horn tok his leve,
For hit was neȝ[11] eve.
Aþelbrus he soȝte,
And ȝaf[12] him þat[13] he broȝte,
And tolde him ful ȝare[14]
Hu[15] he hadde ifare,[16]
And sede[17] him his nede,
And bihet[18] him his mede.[19]
   Aþelbrus also swiþe[20]
Wente to halle blive.[21]
'Kyng,' he sede, 'þu leste[22]
A tale mid þe beste:
Þu schalt bere crune[23]
To-moreȝe[24] in þis tune[25];
To-moreȝe is þi feste[26];
Þer[27] bihoveþ[28] geste.[29]
Hit nere[30] noȝt forloren[31]
For to kniȝti[32] Child[33] Horn,

1 say
2 loving, affectionate
3 down
4 as is right
5 shall be
6 requited
7 grant
8 success
9 mission
10 make known (OE. *bēodan*)
11 nearly
12 gave
13 that which, what
14 readily, quickly
15 how
16 fared (OE. *gefaren*)
17 said, told
18 promised
19 reward
20 as fast as possible
21 in haste
22 listen
23 crown
24 OE. *tō morgen*
25 town
26 feast
27 for this
28 is fitting
29 entertainment, conspicuous act
30 would not be
31 lost, thrown away, without value
32 knight
33 aspirant to knighthood

Þine armes for to welde[1];
God[2] knizt he schal zelde.'[3]
Þe king sede sone:
'Þat is wel idone —
Horn me wel iquemeþ[4];
God knizt him bisemeþ.[5]
He schal have mi dubbing,
And afterward [be] mi derling;
And alle his feren[6] twelf
He schal knizten himself:
Alle he schal hem[7] knizte
Bifore me þis nizte.'
Til þe lizt of day sprang
Ailmar him þuzte[8] lang.
Þe day bigan to springe;
Horn com[9] bivore þe kinge
Mid his twelf yfere[10] —
Sume hi[11] were luþere.[12]
Horn he dubbede to knizte,
Wiþ swerd and spures brizte.
He sette him on a stede[13] whit;
Þer nas no knizt hym ilik.[14]
He smot him a litel wizt,[15]
And bed[16] him beon a god knizt.
Aþulf fel a[17] knes þar[18]
Bivore þe king Aylmar.
'King,' he sede, 'so kene,[19]
Grante me a bene[20]:
Nu[21] is knizt Sire Horn
Þat in Suddenne[22] was iboren[23];

[1] wield
[2] good, valorous
[3] turn out, become
[4] pleases
[5] he seems
[6] companions (OE. *gefēran*)
[7] them
[8] it seemed to Ailmar
[9] came
[10] See l. 9
[11] some of them (some they)
[12] wicked
[13] steed
[14] like (OE. *gelīc*)
[15] a little bit, gently
[16] bade
[17] on
[18] there
[19] brave
[20] boon, request
[21] now
[22] See Intr., p. 11
[23] born (OE. *gebore*

Lord he is of londe
Over us þat bi him stonde[1];
Þin armes he haþ and scheld,[2]
To fiʒte wiþ upon þe feld:
Let him us alle kniʒte,
For þat is ure[3] riʒte.'
Aylmar sede sone ywis[4]:
'Do nu þat þi wille is.'
Horn adun liʒte,[5]
And makede[6] hem alle kniʒtes.
Murie[7] was þe feste,
Al of faire gestes;
Ac Rymenhild nas noʒt þer,
And þat hire þuʒte[8] seve[9] ʒer.[10]
After Horn heo[11] sente,
And he to bure[12] wente.
Nolde he noʒt go one[13] —
Aþulf was his mone.[14]
Rymenhild on flore stod
(Hornes come[15] hire þuʒte god),
And sede: 'Welcome, Sire Horn,
And Aþulf kniʒt þe biforn.
Kniʒt, nu is þi time
For to sitte bi me;
Do nu þat þu er[16] of spake:
To þi wif þu me take;
Ef[17] þu art trewe of dedes,
Do nu ase þu sedes[18];
Nu þu hast wille þine,
Unbind[19] me of my pine.'[20]

1 stand
2 shield
3 our
4 certainly, indeed
5 alighted, descended from horseback
6 made
7 merry, joyous
8 seemed to her
9 seven
10 years
11 she
12 bower, lady's chamber
13 alone
14 companion (OE. *gemāna*)
15 coming
16 before
17 if
18 saidest
19 set free
20 torment

30

'Rymenhild,' quaþ he, 'beo stille
Ihc wulle[1] don al þi wille.
Also[2] hit mot[3] bitide,[4]
Mid spere I schal[5] furst ride,
And mi kniȝthod prove,
Ar[6] Ihc þe ginne[7] to woȝe.[8]
We beþ[9] kniȝtes ȝonge,
Of o[10] dai al isprunge,[11]
And of ure mestere[12]
So[13] is þe manere[14]:
Wiþ sume oþere kniȝte
Wel for his lemman[15] fiȝte,
Or[16] he eni[17] wif take;
Forþi[18] me stondeþ[19] þe more raþe.[20]
To-day, so Crist me blesse,
Ihc wulle do pruesse[21]
For þi luve in þe felde,
Mid spere and mid schelde;
If Ihc come to lyve,[22]
Ihc schal þe take to wyve.'[23]
'Kniȝt,' quaþ heo, 'trewe,
Ihc wene[24] Ihc mai þe leve[25];
Tak nu her þis gold ring,
God him is þe dubbing[26];
Þer is upon þe ringe
Igrave[27] "Rymenhild þe ȝonge.[28]"
Þer nis non betere anonder[29] sunne,
Þat eni man of telle cunne[30];

1 will
2 even so
3 must
4 befall
5 am bound to
6 before
7 begin
8 woo
9 are
10 one, the same
11 having taken origin (OE. *gesprungen*)
12 profession
13 thus
14 custom
15 lady-love
16 before
17 any
18 wherefore
19 there exists for me
20 haste
21 deeds of valor
22 return alive
23 wife
24 think
25 believe, trus
26 ornamentatic
27 engraved
28 Read ȝinge (
29 under
30 may be able

For my luve þu hit were,
And on þi finger þu hit[1] bere.
Þe stones beoþ[2] of suche grace[3]
Þat þu ne schalt in none place
Of none duntes[4] beon ofdrad,[5]
Ne[6] on bataille beon amad,[7]
Ef þu loke þeran,[8]
And þenke upon þi lemman.
And Sire Aþulf, þi broþer,
He schal have anoþer.
Horn, Ihc þe biseche
Wiþ loveliche speche,
Crist ȝeve[9] god endinge,[10]
Þe aȝen[11] to bringe.'
   Þe kniȝt hire gan[12] kesse,
And heo him to blesse.
Leve at[13] hire he nam,[14]
And into halle cam.

HAVELOK THE DANE

Composed before 1300; the unique manuscript (3001 lines) is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and may be dated about 1310. The English poem is probably a translation of a lost French one. The best recent editions are those by Holthausen (London, 1901) and Skeat (Oxford, 1915).

The story is of an exiled prince of Denmark, who becomes a servant at the English court, marries the princess of that country, and finally succeeds to the thrones of both Denmark and England.

'The historical source of the name and fame, and perhaps of the story of Havelok, has been traced to the life of Olaf Sitrieson [see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*], a Danish prince, who, about the middle of the tenth century, reigned for a few years in Northumbria. . . . One of the strongest motives underlying the development of the Havelok legend may well have been political or national, namely, the desire of the Danes to prove their right to sovereignty in England' (Billings, pp. 18, 20).

1 MS. him
2 are
3 power, virtue
4 blows
5 afraid
6 nor
7 crazed, bewildered (OE. *gemǣdd*)
8 upon it
9 grant
10 MS. emdinge
11 back again
12 began
13 of
14 took

The ancient town-seal of Great Grimsby, in Lincolnshire, embodies a manifest allusion to our story. The seal is described at length by J. Hopkin, as quoted in Skeat's edition (pp. liv–lvi), from which the following extract is taken: 'On the right hand of Gryme stands his *protégé* Haveloc ("Habloc"), whom, during one of his mercantile excursions soon after his arrival in Lincolnshire, Gryme had the good fortune to save from imminent danger of shipwreck, and who proved to be the son of Gunter, King of Denmark, and who was therefore conveyed to the British court, where he subsequently received in marriage Goldburgh, the daughter of the British sovereign. Above Gryme is represented a hand, being emblematical of the hand of Providence by which Haveloc was preserved, and near the hand is the star which marks the point where the inscription begins and ends. Haveloc made such a favorable representation of his preserver at the British and Danish courts that he procured for him many honors and privileges. From the British monarch Gryme, who had already realized an abundance of wealth, received a charter, and was made the chief governor of Grimsby; and the Danish sovereign granted to the town an immunity (which is still possessed by the burgesses of Grimsby) from all tolls at the port of Elsineur. Gryme afterwards lived in Grimsby like a petty prince in his hereditary dominions. Above Haveloc is represented a crown, and in his right hand is a battle-axe, the favorite weapon of the Northmen, and in his [left] hand is a ring which he is presenting to the British princess Goldburgh ("Goldebvrgh"), who stands on the left side of Gryme, and whose right hand is held towards the ring. Over her head is a regal diadem, and in her left hand is a sceptre. Sir F. Madden states that it is certain that this seal is at least as old as the time of Edward I (and therefore contemporaneous with the MS.), as the legend is written in a character which after the year 1300 fell into disuse, and was succeeded by the black letter, or Gothic.'

The mention of Elsinore (Elsineur) suggests the name of Hamlet; for the connection between his story and that of Havelok, see the introduction to Israel Gollancz's *Hamlet in Iceland* (London, 1898).

Our extract embraces lines 862–1281.

The earlier part of the story runs as follows: A good king of England, Athelwold, under whom the realm had been serenely peaceful and happy, lay at the point of death, with only an infant daughter, Goldborough, to succeed him. He called to him his lords and thanes, and bade them tell him to whom he might most safely entrust the kingdom until such time as his daughter could bear rule. They all declared that Earl Godrich was the man; and to him the child and the regency of the country were accordingly committed. But love of power made this man false; when Goldborough was twenty years old, he imprisoned her in a strong castle, and himself continued to rule.

Meanwhile, a similar story had been enacted in Denmark. Its king, Birkabeyn, had before his death entrusted his young son and two small daughters to a supposedly faithful vassal, Godard. The latter with his own hands killed two of the children, and ordered a fisherman, Grim, to drown the boy Havelok by the light of the moon. Grim carried Havelok home in a sack; but when he

rose at midnight to drown the child, a bright and shining light streamed fo from the sack, and both Grim and his wife recognized this as a sign of ro blood in the boy. They fell on their knees before him, and promised faith allegiance.

Soon after, Grim decided to flee from the country, and embarked in a boa with his wife, five children, and Havelok. Winds drove him to the coast o England, where he landed at the mouth of the Humber, and dwelt in a spo called, after him, Grimsby. Twelve years later, Havelok, now a well-grown routh, left the family of Grim to seek his fortune; and at this point our selecion begins.

In the manuscript, *th* is frequently found for *ht* and for *t*; in such cases the iange has been made without notice.

To Lincolne barfot he yede.[1]
Hwan[2] he kam þe[r], he was ful wil,[3]
Ne havede[4] he no frend to gangen[5] til[6];
Two dayes þer fastinde[7] he yede,
Þat non[8] for his werk wolde[9] him fede;
Þe þridde[10] day he herde calle:
'Bermen,[11] bermen, hider[12] forth alle!'
[Povre[13] þat on fote yede][14]
Sprongen[15] forth so[16] sparke of[17] glede.[18]
Havelok shof[19] dun[20] [wel][21] nyne or ten
Riht[22] amideward[23] þe fen,[24]
And stirte[25] forth to þe kok,[26]
[Þer[27] the erles mete he tok][14]
Þat he bouhte[28] at þe brigge;
Þe bermen let he alle ligge,[29]
And bar[30] þe mete to þe castel,
And gat[31] him þere a ferþing[32] wastel.[33]

vent (OE. *ēode*)
vhen
ncertain what to do
ad
o

sting
one
s willing
d
ters
er

13 poor people
14 Supplied by Skeat
15 sprang
16 as
17 from; MS. on
18 burning coal
19 shoved, pushed
20 down
21 full
22 right
23 in the midst of
24 mud

25 started, leaped
26 cook
27 where
28 bought
29 lie
30 bore
31 got
32 farthing
33 cake

Þet oþer[1] day he kepte[2] ok[3]
Swiþe yerne[4] þe erles kok,
Til þat he saw[5] him on þe b[r]igge,
And bi him mani fishes ligge.[6]
Þe erles[7] mete havede he bouht
Of Cornwaile,[8] and kalde[9] oft:
'Bermen, bermen, hider swiþe[10]!'
Havelok it herde, and was ful bliþe
Þat he herde 'bermen' calle;
Alle made he hem[11] dun falle
Þat in his gate[12] yeden[13] and stode,[14]
Wel sixtene laddes gode.
Als[15] he lep[16] þe kok [un-]til,[17]
He shof hem alle upon an hyl[18];
Astirte[19] til him with his rippe,[20]
And bigan þe fish to kippe.[21]
He bar up wel a cartelode
Of segges,[22] laxes,[23] of playces[24] brode,[25]
Of grete laumprees,[26] and of eles[27];
Sparede he neyþer tos ne heles
Til þat he to þe castel cam,
Þat men fro him his birþene[28] nam.[29]
Þan men haveden[30] holpen[31] him doun
With þe birþene of his croun,[32]
Þe kok [bi] stod, and on him low,[33]
And þou[h]te him stalworþe man ynow,[34]
And seyde: 'Wiltu[35] ben wit[h] me?

1 second
2 kept watch for; MS. kepte he
3 also
4 very eagerly
5 MS. say
6 lying (to lie)
7 MS. herles
8 MS. cornwalie
9 called
10 quickly
11 them
12 way
13 went
14 stood
15 as
16 leaped
17 unto
18 heap
19 leaped
20 fish-basket
21 take up quickly
22 cuttlefish
23 salmon
24 plaice
25 broad
26 lampreys
27 eels
28 burden
29 took
30 had
31 helped
32 crown, head
33 laughed
34 enough
35 wilt thou

Þet oþer[1] day he kepte[2] ok[3]
Swiþe yerne[4] þe erles kok,
Til þat he saw[5] him on þe b[r]igge,
And bi him mani fishes ligge.[6]
Þe erles[7] mete havede he bouht
Of Cornwaile,[8] and kalde[9] oft:
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20 fish-basket
21 take up quickly
22 cuttlefish
23 salmon
24 plaice
25 broad
26 lampreys
27 eels
28 burden
29 took
30 had
31 helped
32 crown, head
33 laughed
34 enough
35 wilt thou

Gladlike[1] wile Ich feden þe;
Wel is set[2] þe mete þu etes,[3]
And þe hire þat þu getes.'
'Goddot[4]!' quoth he, 'leve[5] sire,
Bidde[6] Ich you non oþer hire;
But yeveþ[7] me inow to ete,
Fir[8] and water Y wile you fete,[9]
Þe fir blowe, an[d] ful wele maken;
Stickes kan Ich breken and kraken,[10]
And kindlen [ek][11] ful wel a fyr,
And maken it to brennen[12] shir[13];
Ful wel kan Ich cleven[14] shides,[15]
Eles toturven[16] of here[17] hides;
Ful wel kan Ich dishes swilen,[18]
And don al þat ye evere wilen.[19]'
Quoth þe kok: 'Wile I no more;
Go þu[20] yunder, and sit þore,[21]
And Y shal yeve þe ful fair bred,
And make þe broys[22] in þe led.[23]
Sit now doun and et[24] ful yerne;
Daþeit hwo[25] þe mete werne[26]!'
Havelok sette him dun anon[27]
Also[28] stille als[28] a ston,
Til he havede ful wel eten;
Þo[29] havede Havelok fayre geten.[30]
Hwan he havede eten inow,
He kam to þe welle, water updrow,
And filde þe[r] a michel[31] so[32];

1 gladly
2 bestowed
3 eatest
4 God wot! MS. soddot
5 dear
6 ask, pray
7 give
8 fire
9 fetch
10 crack
11 also
12 burn
13 brightly
14 cleave
15 thin pieces of wood
16 strip (*NED.* s.v. *tirve*)
17 their
18 wash
19 wish
20 thou
21 there
22 brewis, broth
23 caldron, kettle
24 eat
25 a curse upon him who
26 denies
27 straightway
28 as
29 then
30 done well
31 large
32 tub

Bad he non ageyn[1] him go;
Bitwen[2] his hondes he bar it in,
A[l] him one,[3] to þe kichin.
Bad he non him water to fete,
Ne[4] fro b[r]igge to bere þe mete.
He bar þe turves,[5] he bar þe star,[6]
Þe wode fro the brigge he bar;
Al that evere shulde[7] he nytte,[8]
Al he drow,[9] and al he kitte[10];
Wolde he nevere haven rest,
More þan he were[11] a best.[12]
Of alle men was he mest[13] meke,
Lauhwinde[14] ay, and bliþe of speke[15];
Evere he was glad and bliþe,
His sorwe[16] he couþe[17] ful wel miþe.[18]
It ne was[19] non so litel knave,[20]
For to leyken,[21] ne for to plawe,[22]
Þat he ne wo[l]de with him pleye[23];
Þe children that y[e]den in þe weie
Of him he[24] deden[25] al he[r] wille,
And with him leykeden here[26] fille.
Him loveden alle, stille and bolde,
Knictes, children, yunge and olde[27];
Alle him loveden þat him sowen,[28]
Boþen heye[29] men and lowe.
Of him ful wide þe word sprong,
Hu[30] he was mike[l],[31] hu[30] he was strong,
Hu fayr man God him havede maked,[32]

[1] opposite
[2] MS. but bitwen
[3] alone
[4] nor
[5] turf, peat
[6] a kind of sedge or reed
[7] MS. shulden
[8] require for use
[9] drew
[10] cut; MS. citte
[11] if he were (subj.)
[12] beast
[13] most
[14] laughing
[15] speech
[16] sorrow
[17] could
[18] conceal
[19] there was
[20] lad, boy
[21] frolic
[22] sport
[23] play
[24] they
[25] did
[26] their
[27] MS. holde
[28] saw
[29] high
[30] how; MS. h
[31] tall
[32] made

But-on þat[1] he was almest naked:
For he ne havede nouht to shride[2]
But a kouel[3] ful unride,[4]
Þat [was] ful[5] and swiþe wicke,[6]
Was it nouht worth a fir-sticke.
Þe cok bigan of him to rewe,[7]
And bouhte[8] him cloþes, al span-newe[9];
He bouhte[8] him boþe hosen and shon,
And sone dide him don es on.[10]
  Hwan he was cloþed, [h]osed, and shod
Was non so fayr under God,
Þat evere yete in erþe were,[11]
Non þat evere moder[12] bere[13];
It[14] was nevere man þat yemede[15]
In kineriche,[16] þat so wel semede[17]
King or cayser for to be;
Þan[18] he was shrid,[19] so semede[20] he;
For þanne[18] he[21] weren alle samen[22]
At Lincolne, at þe gamen,[23]
And þe erles men woren[24] al[le] þore,[25]
Þan was Havelok bi þe shuldren[26] more[27]
Þan þe meste[28] þat þer kam;
In armes him no man [ne] nam
Þat he doune sone ne caste;
Havelok stod over hem als a mast.
Als he was heie, so[29] he was strong,[30]
He was boþe stark[31] and long[32];
In Engelond [was] non hise per[33]

1 except in one respect, that
2 to clothe himself
3 garment
4 rough
5 foul
6 mean
7 have pity
8 bought
9 quite new
10 made him put them on
11 was
12 mother
13 bore
14 there
15 governed
16 kingdom; MS. kinneriche
17 was fit
18 when
19 clothed
20 seemed
21 they
22 together
23 games
24 were
25 there
26 shoulders
27 taller
28 tallest
29 MS. al
30 MS. long
31 sturdy
32 MS. strong
33 peer, equal

Of strengþe þat evere kam him ner.[1]
Als he was strong, so was he softe[2];
Þey[3] a man him misdede[4] ofte,
Nevere more he him misseyde,[5]
Ne hond on him with yvele leyde.
Of bodi was he mayden clene;
Nevere yete in garth,[6] ne in grene,
Wit[h] hire[7] ne wolde [he] leyke ne lye,
No more þan it were a strie.[8]
  In þat time al Engelond[9]
Þerl[10] Godrich havede in his hond,
And he gart[11] komen into þe tun[12]
Mani erl and mani barun;
And alle [men] þat lives[13] were
In Eng[e]lond, þanne wer þere,
Þat þey haveden after sent
To ben þer at þe parlement.
With hem com mani champioun,[14]
Mani wiht[15] ladde,[16] blac, and brown;
An[d] fel[17] it so þat yunge men,
Wel abouten nine or ten,
Bigunnen þere[18] for to layke:
Þider komen boþe stronge and wayke[19];
Þider komen lesse and more,
Þat in þe borw[20] þanne weren þore[21];
Chaumpiouns,[22] and starke laddes,
Bondemen,[23] with here[24] gaddes,[25]
Als he[26] comen fro þe plow;
Þere was sembling[27] inow!

[1] near
[2] mild, gentle
[3] though
[4] injured
[5] reproached, spoke ill of; MS. misdede
[6] garden, enclosure; MS. game
[7] her (a woman)
[8] old hag
[9] MS. Hengelond
[10] the earl
[11] made, had
[12] town
[13] alive
[14] MS. chambioun
[15] stout
[16] lad
[17] happened
[18] MS. þe
[19] weak
[20] borough
[21] there
[22] MS. chaunpiouns
[23] husbandmen
[24] their
[25] goads
[26] they
[27] assembling

For it[1] ne was non horse-knave,[2]
Þou[3] þei sholden in honde have,[4]
Þat he ne kam þider, þe leyk[5] to se:
Biforn here fet þanne lay a tre,
And putten[6] with a mikel ston
Þe starke laddes, ful god won.[7]
Þe ston was mikel, and ek[8] gret,
And al so hevi so a net[9];
Grundstalw[u]rþe[10] man he sholde[11] be
Þat mouhte[12] liften it to his kne;
Was þer neyþer clerc ne prest[13]
Þat mihte[12] liften it to his brest:
Þerwit[h][14] putten the chaumpiouns[15]
Þat þider comen with þe barouns.
Hwoso mihte putten þore
Biforn anoþer an inch or more,
Wore[16] he yung, wore he old,[17]
He was for a kempe[18] told.[19]
Also[20] þe[i] stoden, an[d] ofte stareden,[21]
Þe chaumpiouns,[15] and ek the ladden[22];
And he[23] maden mikel strout[24]
Abouten þe alþerbeste[25] b[o]ut,[26]
Havelok stod, and lokede þertil[27];
And of puttingge he was ful wil,[28]
For nevere yete ne saw he or[29]
Putten the stone, or[29] þanne þor.
Hise mayster bad him gon þerto,

1 there
2 groom
3 MS. þo
4 Though they (*for* he) should have [work] in hand
5 game
6 put; MS. pulten
7 in considerable numbers (won = plenty)
8 also
9 young ox
10 extremely stalwart
11 had need to
12 could
13 priest
14 with this
15 MS. chaunpiouns
16 were
17 MS. hold
18 knight, champion
19 counted
20 as
21 stared
22 lads
23 they
24 contention
25 best of all
26 bout, throw
27 thereto
28 inexperienced
29 before

5. **ston**: for the history of the game, see note in Skeat's edition.

Als he couþe[1] þerwith do.
Þo hise mayster it him bad,
He was of him sore adrad;
Þerto he stirte[2] sone anon,
And kipte[3] up þat hevi ston,
Þat he sholde put[t]en wiþe;
He putte, at þe firste siþe,[4]
Over[5] alle þat þer wore,
Twel[ve] fote,[6] and sumdel[7] more.
Þe chaumpiouns[8] þat [þat] put sowen,[9]
Shuldreden he ilc oþer,[10] and lowen[11];
Wolden he no more to putting gange,
But seyde: 'We dwellen her to[12] longe!'
Þis selkouth[13] mihte nouht ben hyd:
Ful sone it was ful loude kid[14]
Of Havelok, hu[15] he warp[16] þe ston
Over þe laddes everilkon[17];
Hu[15] he was fayr, hu[15] he was long,
Hu[15] he was wiht,[18] hu[15] he was strong;
Þorhut[19] England yede þe speke,[20]
Hu[15] he was strong, and ek [ful] meke;
In the castel, up in þe halle,
Þe knihtes speken þerof alle,
So that Godrich it herde wel.
Þe[i] speken of Havelok, everi del,[21]
Hu[15] he was strong man and hey,
Hu[15] he was strong, and ek [ful] sley[22];
And þouhte[23] Godrich: 'Þoru[24] þis knave
Shal Ich Engelond al have,
And mi sone after me;

1 could
2 leaped
3 snatched
4 time
5 beyond
6 feet
7 somewhat
8 MS. chaunpiouns
9 saw
10 one another
11 laughed
12 too
13 wonder
14 made known
15 MS. hw
16 threw
17 every one
18 courageous
19 throughout; MS. þoruth
20 speech; MS. speche
21 on every side (?)
22 skilful; MS. fri
23 MS. þouthte
24 through

For so I wile þat it be.
King[1] Aþelwald me dide[2] swere
Upon al þe messe-gere[3]
Þat Y shu[l]de his douhter yive[4]
Þe hexte[5] [man] þat mihte live,
Þe beste, þe fairest, þe strangest[6] ok
Þat gart[7] he me sweren on þe bok.
Hwere mihte I finden ani so hey
So Havelok is, or so sley?
Þou[h] Y souhte heþen[8] into Ynde,[9]
So fayr, so strong, ne mihte Y finde.
Havelok is þat ilke[10] knave
Þat shal Goldeborw have.'
Þis þouhte [he] with trechery,
Wit[h] traysoun, and with felony;
For he wende[11] þat Havelok wore[12]
Sum cherles sone, and no more;
Ne shulde he haven of Engellond
Onlepi[13] forw[14] in his hond
With hire þat was þerof [þe] eyr,[15]
Þat boþe was god and swiþe fair.
He wende þat Havelok wer a þral,[16]
Þerþoru[17] he wende haven al
In Engelond, þat hire riht was;
He werse was[18] þan Sathanas
Þat Jesu Crist in erþe shop[19];
Hanged worþe[20] he on an hok!
After Goldebo[r]w sone he sende,
Þat was boþe fayr and hende,[21]
And dide hire to Lincolne bringe[22];

1 MS. the king
2 caused
3 utensils of the mass
4 MS. yeve
5 highest, tallest
6 strongest
7 made
8 hence
9 India
10 very
11 supposed
12 was
13 a single
14 furrow
15 heir
16 slave
17 for this reason, by this means
18 MS. was werse
19 shaped, created
20 may he be
21 gentle, courteous
22 and had her brought to Lincoln

Belles dede he ageyn hire[1] ringen,
And joie he made hire swiþe mikel,
But neþeles[2] he was ful swikel.[3]
He seyde þat he sholde hire yive[4]
Þe fayrest man that mihte live.
She answerede and seyde anon,
Bi [Jesu] Crist and bi Seint John,[5]
Þat hire sholde no man wedde,
Ne no man bringen hire to[6] bedde,
But[7] he were king or kinges eyr,
Were he nevere man so fayr.
Godrich þe erl was swiþe wroth
Þat she swor swilk[8] an oth,
And seyde: 'Hweþer[9] þou wilt be
Quen and levedi[10] over me?
Þou shalt haven a gadeling,[11]
Ne shalt þou haven non oþer king;
Þe shal spusen[12] mi cokes knave;
Shalt[13] þou non oþer loverd[14] have.
Daþeit þat[15] þe oþer[16] yive[4]
Everemore hwil I live!
To-mo[r]we sholen[17] ye[18] ben weddet,
And, maugre þin,[19] togidere beddet.'
Goldeborw gret,[20] and was hire ille[21];
She wolde ben ded, bi hire wille.
On þe morwen, hwan day was sprungen,
And daybelle[22] at [þe] kirke[23] rungen,
After Havelok sente þat Judas,
Þat werse was þanne Sathanas,

[1] at her approach
[2] nevertheless
[3] deceitful
[4] MS. yeve
[5] MS. Iohan
[6] MS. to hire
[7] unless
[8] such
[9] MS. hwor
[10] lady
[11] vagabond, low fellow
[12] marry
[13] MS. ne shalt
[14] lord
[15] a curse upon him who
[16] another
[17] shall
[18] MS. ye sholen
[19] in spite of thee
[20] wept
[21] it was ill for her
[22] matin-bell
[23] church

And seyde: 'Mayster, wiltu[1] wif[2]?'
'Nay,' quoth Havelok, 'bi my lif!
Hwat sholde Ich with wive[3] do?
I ne may hire fede, ne cloþe, ne sho.
[H]wider sholde Ich wimman[4] bringe?
I ne have none kin[n]es[5] þinge.
I ne have hus,[6] Y ne have cote,
I ne[7] have stikke, Y ne have sprote,[8]
I ne have neyþer bred ne sowel,[9]
Ne cloth, but of an old whit[10] couel.[11]
Þis[12] cloþes, þat Ich onne have,
Aren þe kokes, and Ich his knave.'
  Godrich stirt[13] up, and on him dong[14]
[With dintes[15] swiþe hard and strong],[16]
And seyde: 'But[17] þou hire take
Þat Y wole yeven þe to make,[18]
I shal hangen þe ful heye,
Or Y shal þristen[19] ut þin eie.[20]'
Havelok was one,[21] and was adrad,[22]
And grauntede him al þat he bad.
Þo[23] sende he after hire sone,[24]
Þe fayrest wymman under mone[25];
And seyde til hire, [fals][16] and slike,[26]
Þat wicke þral, þat foule swike[27]:
'But þu þis man understonde,[28]
I shal flemen[29] þe of[30] londe;
Or þou shal[t] to þe galwes[31] renne,[32]

vilt thou; MS. wilte
ake a wife
MS. wif
. woman
of no kind
MS. hws
MS. ne i
sprout, twig
relish eaten with bread
MS. hold with
garment

12 these
13 started
14 struck
15 blows
16 Supplied by Skeat
17 unless
18 mate, wife
19 thrust
20 MS. heie
21 alone
22 MS. odrat

23 then
24 soon
25 the moon
26 smooth
27 traitor
28 receive
29 banish
30 from
31 gallows
32 run

And þer þou shalt in a fir brenne.'[1]
Sho[2] was adrad, for he so þrette,[3]
And durste[4] nouht þe spusing[5] lette[6];
But þey[7] hire likede[8] swiþe ille,
[Sho] þouhte it was Godes wille:
God, þat makes to growen þe korn,
Formede hire wimman to be born.
  Hwan he havede him don,[9] for drede,
Þat he sholde hire spusen and fede,
And þat she sholde til him holde,
Þer weren penies[10] þicke tolde,[11]
Mikel plente upon þe bok:
He[12] ys[13] hire yaf, and she [e]s[14] tok.
He[15] weren spused fayre and wel:
Þe messe he dede,[16] [and] everidel[17]
Þat fel[18] to spusing, a[19] god cle[r]k,[20]
Þe Erchebishop ut of[21] Yerk,
Þat kam to þe parlement,
Als God him havede þider sent.
  Hwan he[22] togydere in Godes lawe
Weren,[23] þat[24] folc[25] ful wel it sawe,
He ne wisten[26] hwat he mouhten,[27]
Ne he ne wisten [h]wat hem douhte[28] —
Þer to dwellen, or þenne[29] to gonge.
Þer ne wolden he dwellen longe;
For he wisten, and ful wel sawe,
Godrich[30] hem hatede, þe devel him awe[31]!
And yf he dwelleden þer ouht[32] —

[1] burn
[2] she
[3] threatened
[4] dared
[5] marriage
[6] hinder
[7] though
[8] it pleased her
[9] caused; MS. don him
[10] pennies
[11] counted in great number
[12] Godrich
[13] them
[14] them; MS. as
[15] they
[16] performed; MS. deden
[17] everything
[18] pertained
[19] MS. and
[20] clergyman
[21] out of, from
[22] they
[23] Transposed from preceding line (weren togydere)
[24] MS. þat þe
[25] people
[26] knew
[27] could do
[28] availed them
[29] thence
[30] MS. þat Godrich
[31] own, possess; MS. h
[32] any space of time

Þat fel Havelok ful wel on þouht—
Men sholde don his leman shame,
Or elles bringen in wicke[1] blame;
Þat were him levere[2] to ben ded.
Forþi[3] he[4] token anoþer red,[5]
Þat þei sholden þenne fle[6]
Til[7] Grim, and til[7] hise sones þre;
Þer wenden[8] he[4] alþerbeste[9] to spede,[10]
Hem[11] for to cloþe, and for to fede.
Þe lond he[4] token under fote,[12]
Ne wisten he[4] non oþer bote,[13]
And helden ay the rihte sti[14]
Til he[4] komen to Grimesby.
  Þanne[15] he[4] komen þere, þanne was Grim ded,
Of him ne haveden he[4] no red;
But hise children alle fyve
Alle weren yet on live[16];
Þat[17] ful fayre ayen[18] hem neme,[19]
Hwan he[4] wisten þat he[4] keme,[20]
And maden joie swiþe mikel;
Ne weren he[4] nevere ayen hem fikel.[21]
On knes ful fayre he[4] hem setten,
And Havelok swiþe fayre gretten,[22]
And seyden: 'Welkome, loverd[23] dere,
And welkome be þi fayre fere[24]!
Blessed be þat ilke þrawe[25]
Þat þou hire toke in Godes lawe!
Wel is us[26] we sen þe on lyve,
Þou mihte[27] us boþe selle and yive[28];

1 wicked
2 liefer, rather
3 therefore
4 they
5 counsel, help
6 flee
7 to
8 thought
9 best of all
10 prosper
11 themselves
12 they walked
13 remedy
14 road
15 when
16 in life = alive
17 who
18 towards
19 went
20 were coming
21 fickle
22 greeted
23 lord
24 companion, wife
25 time, moment
26 to us; MS. hus
27 might
28 MS. yeve

And þer þou shalt in a fir brenne.'[1]
Sho[2] was adrad, for he so þrette,[3]
And durste[4] nouht þe spusing[5] lette[6];
But þey[7] hire likede[8] swiþe ille,
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Þe messe he dede,[16] [and] everidel[17]
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   Hwan he[22] togydere in Godes lawe
Weren,[23] þat[24] folc[25] ful wel it sawe,
He ne wisten[26] hwat he mouhten,[27]
Ne he ne wisten [h]wat hem douhte[28] —
Þer to dwellen, or þenne[29] to gonge.
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[1] burn
[2] she
[3] threatened
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Men sholde don his leman shame,
Or elles bringen in wicke[1] blame;
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Þat þei sholden þenne fle[6]
Til[7] Grim, and til[7] hise sones þre;
Þer wenden[8] he[4] alþerbeste[9] to spede,[10]
Hem[11] for to cloþe, and for to fede.
Þe lond he[4] token under fote,[12]
Ne wisten he[4] non oþer bote,[13]
And helden ay the rihte sti[14]
Til he[4] komen to Grimesby.
   Þanne[15] he[4] komen þere, þanne was Grim ded,
Of him ne haveden he[4] no red;
But hise children alle fyve
Alle weren yet on live[16];
Þat[17] ful fayre ayen[18] hem neme,[19]
Hwan he[4] wisten þat he[4] keme,[20]
And maden joie swiþe mikel;
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[1] wicked
[2] liefer, rather
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[4] they
[5] counsel, help
[6] flee
[7] to
[8] thought
[9] best of all
[10] prosper
[11] themselves
[12] they walked
[13] remedy
[14] road
[15] when
[16] in life = alive
[17] who
[18] towards
[19] went
[20] were coming
[21] fickle
[22] greeted
[23] lord
[24] companion, wife
[25] time, moment
[26] to us; MS. hus
[27] might
[28] MS. yeve

Þou mayt us boþe yive[1] and selle,
With-þat[2] þou wilt here dwelle.
We haven, loverd, alle gode,[3]
Hors,[4] and net,[5] and ship on flode,[6]
Gold, and silver, and michel auhte,[7]
Þat Grim ure fader us bitauhte[8];
Gold, and silver, and oþer fe[9]
Bad he us bitaken[10] þe.
We haven shep, we haven swin,
Bileve[11] her, loverd, and al be þin!
Þo[u] shalt ben loverd, þou shalt ben syre,[12]
And we sholen serven þe and hire;
And ure[13] sistres sholen do
Al that evere biddes sho[14];
He[15] sholen hire cloþes[16] washen and wringen,
And to[17] hondes water bringen;
He[15] sholen bedden[18] hire and þe,
For levedi wile we þat she be.'
Hwan he[15] þis joie haveden maked,
Sithen[19] stikes broken and kraked,
And þe fir brouht on brenne,[20]
Ne was þer spared gos[21] ne henne,
Ne þe ende,[22] ne þe drake,
Mete he[15] deden plente make;[23]
Ne wantede þere no god mete;
Wyn and ale deden he[15] fete,[24]
And maden[25] hem glade and bliþe,
Wesseyl ledden[26] he fele siþe.[27]

1 MS. yeve
2 provided that
3 property, goods
4 horses
5 cattle
6 sea
7 possessions; MS. auchte
8 delivered, committed; MS. bitawchte
9 property
10 deliver, commit
11 remain
12 seignior, master
13 our; MS. hure
14 she
15 they
16 MS. cloþen
17 for
18 put to bed
19 afterwards
20 to burning
21 goose
22 duck; MS. hende
23 they had plenty of meats prepared
24 they caused to be brought
25 MS. made
26 they led wassails (drank healths)
27 many times

On þe niht, as Goldeborw lay,
Sory and sorwful was she ay,
For she wende she were biswike,[1]
Þat she were[2] yeven[3] unkyndelike.[4]
O niht[5] saw she þerinne a liht,[6]
A swiþe fayr, a swiþe bryht,
Al so briht, al so shir[7]
So[8] it were a blase[9] of fir.
She lokede no[r]þ, and ek south,
And saw it comen ut of his mouth,
Þat lay bi hire in þe bed —
No ferlike[10] þou[h] she were adred!
Þouhte she: '[H]wat may this bimene[11]?
He beth[12] heyman[13] yet, als Y wene[14];
He beth heyman er he be[12] ded.'
On hise shuldre, of gold red
She saw a swiþe noble croiz,[15]
Of an angel she herde a voyz[16]:
'Goldeborw, lat þi sorwe be,[17]
For Havelok, þat haveþ spuset þe,
Is[18] kinges sone and kinges eyr[19];
Þat bikenneth[20] þat croiz so fayr.
It bikenneth more — þat he shal
Denemark haven, and Englond al;
He shal ben king, strong and stark,
Of Engelond and Denemark;
Þat shal[t] þu wit[h] þin eyne sen,
And þo[u] shalt quen and levedi ben.'
Þanne[21] she havede herd the stevene[22]
Of þe angel ut of hevene,

[1] cheated, deceived
[2] MS. shere (*for* she were)
[3] given
[4] beneath her rank
[5] in the night
[6] light
[7] shining
[8] as if
[9] blaze
[10] wonder
[11] mean
[12] is
[13] nobleman
[14] think
[15] cross
[16] voice
[17] put aside thy sorrow
[18] MS. he
[19] heir
[20] betokens
[21] when
[22] voice

She was so fele siþes[1] blithe
Þat she ne mihte hire ioie mythe[2]—
But Havelok sone anon she kiste;
And he slep, and nouht ne wiste[3]
Hwat þat aungel havede seyd.

GOWER, CONFESSIO AMANTIS

John Gower—'moral Gower,' as Chaucer called him— [illegible] 1330, and died between August 15 and October 24, 1408. He was of a Kentish family, a layman, and a man of some wealth. For the most part, he probably resided in London, and was personally known to Richard II. While living in Southwark, he married one Agnes Groundolf on January 25, 1397/8, and perhaps had been married before. He lies buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark, formerly called St. Mary Overey. The effigy of the poet, beneath a three-arched canopy, exhibits his head resting upon three volumes, bearing the names of his three principal works—*Speculum Meditantis*, *Vox Clamantis*, and *Confessio Amantis*.

Of these the first, now known as the *Mirour de l'Omme* (*Speculum Hominis*) has only recently been discovered. This is in French, the *Vox Clamantis* in Latin, and the *Confessio Amantis* in English. The French work was the earliest, the Latin work was produced about 1382, while the English work assumed its final form in 1393. The *Confessio Amantis* contains more than 33,000 lines, surpassing the *Mirour de l'Omme* by above 4000 lines. Besides these three, Gower wrote several minor works. The whole has been critically edited in four volumes by G. C. Macaulay (Oxford, 1899–1902). In the French and the Latin poems, Gower's tendency is markedly didactic. In the English poem his general theme is love, which he illustrates by a series of 112 stories.

Lowell said, in his essay on Chaucer: 'Gower has positively raised tediousness to the precision of a science.' A fairer judgment is that by Ker (*English Literature, Mediæval*, pp. 225–226): 'Gower should always be remembered along with Chaucer; he is what Chaucer might have been without genius and without his Italian reading, but with his critical tact, and much of his skill in verse and diction. The *Confessio Amantis* is monotonous, but it is not dull. Much of it at a time is wearisome, but as it is composed of a number of separate stories, it can be read in bits, and ought to be so read. Taken one at a time the clear bright little passages come out with a meaning and a charm that may be lost when the book is read too perseveringly.'

The *Apollonius of Tyre*, the first of our extracts, was first written in Greek (probably third century), and afterwards translated into Latin. Gower paraphrased the Latin, and the Shakespearean (?) *Pericles* is, in turn, based upon

[1] so many times, so very [2] conceal [3] knew

Gower. For further particulars concerning Apollonius, see my *First Book in Old English*, pp. 164–165.

The Æson story is derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (7. 162–293), 132 lines of the original being expanded to 230. A portion of this Ovidian passage (*Met.* 7. 197 ff.), extremely condensed by Gower, reappears in Shakespeare's *Tempest* 5. 1. 33–50.

APOLLONIUS OF TYRE

8. 597–911

Of Tharsiens[1] his leve anon
He[2] tok, and is to schipe gon.
His cours he nam[3] with seil updrawe,[4]
Where as[5] Fortune doth[6] the lawe,
And scheweth, as I schal reherse,
How sche[7] was to this lord diverse,[8]
The which[9] upon the see sche ferketh.[10]
The wynd aros, the weder derketh,[11]
It blew and made such tempeste
Non ancher mai the schip areste,
Which hath tobroken al his gere[12];
The schipmen stode in such a feere,
Was non that myhte himself bestere,[13]
Bot evere awaite upon the lere,[14]
Whan that thei scholde drenche[15] at ones.
Ther was ynowh withinne wones[16]
Of wepinge and of sorghe[17] tho[18];
This yonge king makth mochel wo
So for to se the schip travaile[19]:
Bot al that myhte him noght availe;
The mast tobrak,[20] the seil torof[21];
The schip upon the wawes drof,

[1] the people of Tarsus
[2] Apollonius
[3] took
[4] drawn up
[5] wherever
[6] makes, lays down
[7] Fortune
[8] contrary
[9] Apollonius
[10] conducts
[11] grows dark
[12] tackle
[13] bestir
[14] destruction, shipwreck (OE. *lyre*)
[15] drown
[16] reach
[17] sorrow
[18] then
[19] labor
[20] snapped
[21] was rent

Unto the gamen[1] alle and some[2]
Of hem that ben delivere[3] and wyhte,[4]
To do such maistrie[5] as thei myhte.
Thei made hem naked as thei scholde,
For so that ilke[6] game wolde,[7]
As it was tho custume and us[8];
Amonges hem was no refus.[9]
The flour of al the toun was there,
And of the court also ther were;
And that was in a large place
Riht evene[10] afore the kinges face,
Which Artestrathes[11] thanne hihte.[12]
The pley was pleid riht in his sihte,
And who most worthi was of dede
Receive he scholde a certein mede,[13]
And in the cite bere a pris.[14]
  Appolinus, which, war[15] and wys,
Of every game couthe[16] an ende,[17]
He thoghte assaie,[18] hou so it wende,[19]
And fell among hem into game;
And there he wan him such a name,
So as the king himself acompteth,[20]
That he alle othre men surmonteth,
And bar the pris above hem alle.
The king bad that into his halle
At souper-time he schal be broght;
And he cam thanne, and lefte[21] it noght,
Withoute compaignie, alone.
Was non so semlich[22] of persone,
Of visage and of limes[23] bothe,

1 games
2 one and all
3 active
4 nimble
5 feat
6 same
7 required
8 use
9 refusal
10 directly
11 Arcestrates
12 was called
13 reward
14 prize
15 wary
16 knew
17 an ende = pretty thoroug
18 to try
19 might turn out
20 deems
21 neglected
22 seemly
23 limbs

If that he hadde what to clothe[1];
At souper-time, natheles,
The king amiddes al the pres[2]
Let[3] clepe[4] him up among hem alle,
And bad his mareschall[5] of halle
To setten him in such degre[6]
That he upon him myhte se.
The king was sone set and served,
And he, which hath his pris deserved
After the kinges oghne[7] word,
Was mad beginne[8] a middel bord,[9]
That bothe king and queene him sihe.[10]
He sat and caste aboute his yhe,
And sih the lordes in astat,[11]
And with himself wax[12] in debat,
Thenkende[13] what he hadde lore[14];
And such a sorwe he tok therfore,
That he sat evere stille and thoghte,
As he which of no mete[15] roghte.[16]
  The king behield his hevynesse,[17]
And, of his grete gentillesse,
His doghter, which was fair and good,
And ate[18] bord before him stod,
As it was thilke[19] time usage,[20]
He bad to gon on his message,
And fonde[21] for to make him glad.
And sche dede as hire fader bad,
And goth to him the softe pas,[22]
And axeth whenne[23] and what he was,
And preith he scholde his thoghtes leve.[24]

1 wear
2 press, crowd
3 bade
4 to call
5 marshal
6 station
7 own
8 to begin, sit at the head of
9 table
10 might see
11 state
12 grew
13 thinking
14 lost
15 food
16 took account, recked
17 sadness
18 at the
19 that
20 custom
21 attempt
22 pace
23 whence
24 abandon

Mi name is hote[2] Appolinus;
And of mi richesse it is thus –
Upon the see I have it lore.
The contre wher as I was bo:
Wher that my lond is and mi
I lefte at Tyr, whan that I wente,
The worschipe[4] of this worldes aghte,[5]
Unto the god ther I betaghte.[6]'
And thus togedre as thei tuo speeke,
The teres runne be[7] his cheeke.
  The king, which therof tok good kepe,[8]
Hath gret pite to sen him wepe,
And for his doghter sende ayein,
And preide hir faire, and gan to sein[9]
That sche no lengere wolde drecche,[10]
Bot that sche wolde anon forth fecche
Hire harpe, and don al that sche can
To glade with[11] that sory man.
And sche, to don hir fader[12] heste,[13]
Hir harpe fette,[14] and, in the feste,[15]
Upon a chaier which thei fette
Hirself next to this man sche sette;
With harpe bothe, and ek with mouthe,
To him sche dede al that sche couthe
To make him chiere[16] — and evere he sik
And sche him axeth hou him liketh.[18]
'Madame, certes[19] wel,' he seide,
'Bot, if ye the mesure pleide
Which, if you list, I schal you liere,[20]
It were a glad thing for to hiere.'

1 by
2 called
3 income
4 honor
5 goods
6 committed
7 along, down
8 heed
9 say
10 delay
11 with which to gladden
12 father's
13 command
14 fetched

'Ha, lieve sire,[1]' tho[2] quod sche,
'Now tak the harpe, and let me se
Of what mesure that ye mene.'
Tho preith the king, tho preith the queen
Forth with[3] the lordes alle arewe,[4]
That he som merthe wolde schewe;
He takth the harpe, and in his wise
He tempreth,[5] and of such assise[6]
Singende he harpeth forth withal,
That as a vois celestial
Hem thoghte[7] it souneth in here ere,
As thogh that he an angel were.
Thei gladen of his melodie;
Bot, most of all the compainie,
The kinges doghter, which it herde,
And thoghte ek[8] hou that he ansuerde,
Whan that he was of[9] hire opposed,[10]
Withinne hir herte hath wel supposed
That he is of gret gentilesse.
Hise dedes ben therof witnesse,
Forth with the wisdom of his lore;
It nedeth noght to seche[11] more —
He myhte noght have such manere,
Of gentil blod bot-if[12] he were.
Whanne he hath harped al his fille,
The kinges heste to fulfille,
Awey goth dissh, awey goth cuppe,
Doun goth the bord, the cloth was uppe,
Thei risen and gon out of halle.
The king his chamberlein let calle,
And bad that he be alle weie[13]
A chambre for this man pourveie,[14]

ir
…er with
[4] successively (in a row)
[5] tunes
[6] in such manner
[7] it seemed to them
[8] eke, also
[9] by
[10] questioned
[11] seek
[12] unless
[13] without fa…
[14] purvey, p…

Which nyh his oghne chambre be.[1]
'It schal be do,[2] mi lord,' quod he.
Appolinus, of whom I mene,[3]
Tho tok his leve of king and queene,
And of the worthi maide also,
Which preide unto hir fader tho
That sche myhte of that yonge man
Of tho[4] sciences whiche he can[5]
His lore[6] have; and in this wise
The king hir granteth his aprise,[7]
So that himself therto assente.
Thus was acorded, er thei wente,
That he, with al that evere he may,
This yonge faire freisshe may[8]
Of that he couthe scholde enforme;
And, full assented in this forme,
Thei token leve as for that nyht.
And, whanne it was amorwe[9] lyht,
Unto this yonge man of Tyr
Of clothes and of good atir,
With gold and selver to despende,[10]
This worthi yonge lady sende;
And thus sche made him wel at ese;
And he, with al that he can plese,
Hire serveth wel and faire[11] ayein.
He tawhte hir til sche was certein
Of harpe, of citole,[12] and of rote,[13]
With many a tun[14] and many a note
Upon musique, upon mesure;
And of hire harpe the temprure[15]
He tawhte hire ek, as he wel couthe.

[1] should be
[2] done
[3] make mention
[4] those
[5] knows
[6] teaching
[7] instruction
[8] damsel
[9] in the morning
[10] spend
[11] fairly
[12] dulcimer
[13] violin
[14] tune
[15] tuning

Bot, as men sein that frele[1] is youthe,
With leisir[2] and continuance
This mayde fell upon a chance,
That Love hath mad him[3] a querele[4]
Ayein hire youthe freissh and frele,
That malgre[5] wher[6] sche wole[7] or noght,
Sche mot[8] with al hire hertes thoght
To Love and to his lawe obeie;
And that sche schal ful sore abeie,[9]
For sche wot[10] nevere what it is,
Bot evere among[11] sche fieleth[12] this.
Thenkende upon this man of Tyr,
Hire herte is hot as eny fyr,
And otherwhile it is acale;
Now is sche red, nou is sche pale,
Riht after the condicion
Of hire ymaginacion;
Bot evere among hire thoghtes alle,
Sche thoghte, what so mai befalle,
Or[13] that sche lawhe,[14] or that sche wepe,
Sche wolde hire goode name kepe,
For feere of wommanysshe[15] schame.
Bot, what in ernest and in game,
Sche stant[16] for love in such a plit[17]
That sche hath lost al appetit
Of mete, of drinke, of nyhtes reste,
As sche that not[18] what is the beste.
Bot, for to thenken al hir fille,
Sche hield[19] hire ofte times stille
Withinne hir chambre, and goth noght oute;

1 frail
2 leisure
3 for himself
4 attack
5 in spite of
6 whether
7 will
8 must
9 atone for
10 knows
11 in the course (of things)
12 feels
13 whether
14 laugh
15 womanly
16 stands
17 plight
18 knows not
19 held

The king was of hire lif in doute,
Which wiste nothing what it mente.
Bot fell a time, as he out wente
To walke, of princes sones thre
Ther come and felle to his kne;
And ech of hem in sondri wise
Besoghte and profreth his servise,
So that he myhte his doghter have.
The king, which wolde his honour save,
Seith sche is siek,[1] and of that speche
Tho[2] was no time to beseche;
Bot ech of hem do make[3] a bille[4]
He bad, and wryte his oghne wille,
His name, his fader, and his good[5];
And whan sche wiste hou that it stod,
And hadde here[6] billes oversein,[7]
Thei scholden have ansuere ayein.
Of this conseil thei weren glad,
And writen as the king hem bad;
And every man his oghne bok
Into the kinges hond betok,[8]
And he it to his dowhter sende,
And preide hir for to make an ende
And wryte ayein hire oghne hond,
Riht[9] as sche in hire herte fond.
The billes weren wel received;
Bot sche hath alle here loves weyved,[10]
And thoghte tho was time and space
To put hire in hir fader[11] grace,
And wrot ayein, and thus sche saide:
'The schame which is in a maide
With speche dar noght ben unloke,[12]

1 sick
2 then
3 cause to make, have made
4 memorandum
5 property
6 their
7 looked over
8 delivered
9 just
10 put aside, reje
11 father's
12 unlocked

Bot in writinge it mai be spoke;
So wryte I to you, fader, thus:
Bot-if I have Appolinus,
Of al this world, what so betyde,
I wol non other man abide;
And certes if I of him faile,
I wot riht wel, withoute faile,
Ye schull for me be dowhterles.'
This lettre cam, and ther was press
Tofore[1] the king, ther as[2] he stod;
And whan that he it understod,
He yaf[3] hem ansuer by and by[4];
Bot that was do[5] so prively
That non of othres conseil wiste.
Thei toke her leve, and wher hem liste[6]
Thei wente forth upon here weie.

ÆSON'S RESTORATION TO YOUTH

5. 3945–4174

Jason, which sih his fader old,
Upon Medea made him[7] bold
Of art magique, which sche couthe,[8]
And preith hire that his fader[9] youthe
Sche wolde make ayeinward[10] newe;
And sche, that was toward him trewe,
Behihte[11] him that sche wolde it do,
Whan that sche time sawh therto.
Bot what sche dede in that matiere[12]
It is a wonder thing to hiere;
Bot yit, for the novellerie,[13]
I thenke tellen a partie.[14]

[1] before
[2] where
[3] gave
[4] directly
[5] done
[6] it was pleasing to them
[7] himself
[8] knew
[9] father's
[10] again
[11] promised
[12] matter
[13] novelty
[14] part

Thus it befell upon a nyht,
Whan ther was noght bot sterreliht,
Sche was vanyssht riht as hir liste,[1]
That no wyht bot hirself it wiste,
And that was ate[2] mydnyht-tyde.
The world was stille on every side;
With open hed and fot al bare,
Hir her[3] tosprad,[4] sche gan to fare;
Upon hir clothes gert[5] sche was.
Al specheles,[6] and on the gras,
Sche glod[7] forth as an addre doth —
Non otherwise sche ne goth —
Til sche cam to the freisshe flod;
And there a while sche with[8] stod.
Thries sche torned hire aboute,
And thries ek sche gan doun loute,
And in the flod sche wette hir her;
And thries on the water ther
Sche gaspeth with a drecchinge[9] onde,[10]
And tho sche tok hir speche on honde.
Ferst sche began to clepe[11] and calle
Upward unto the sterres alle;
To wynd, to air, to see, to lond,
Sche preide, and ek hield up hir hond
To Echates[12] — and gan to crie —
Whiche is goddesse of sorcerie.
Sche seide: 'Helpeth[13] at this nede,
And, as ye maden me to spede[14]
Whan Jason cam the flees to seche,
So help me nou, I you beseche.'
With that sche loketh, and was war
Doun fro the sky ther cam a char,[15]

1 pleased
2 at the
3 hair
4 spread abroad (Lat. *nudos humeris infusa capillos*)
5 girt (Lat. *vestes induta recinctas*)
6 Lat. *per muta silentia noctis*
7 glided
8 by, near
9 troubled, agonizing
10 breath
11 cry
12 Heca
13 help
14 succe
15 charic

The which dragouns aboute drowe[1];
And tho sche gan hir hed doun bowe,
And up sche styh,[2] and faire and wel
Sche drof[3] forth bothe char and whel[4]
Above in th' air among the skyes.
  The lond of Crete and tho[5] parties[6]
Sche soughte, and faste gan hire hye,[7]
And there, upon the hulles[8] hyhe
Of Othrin and Olimpe also,
And ek of othre hulles mo,[9]
Sche fond[10] and gadreth herbes suote[11];
Sche pulleth up som be the rote,
And manye with a knyf sche scherth,[12]
And alle into hir char sche berth.
Thus whan sche hath the hulles sought,
The flodes ther foryat sche nought[13] —
Eridian and Amphrisos,
Peneie and ek Spercheidos;
To hem sche wente, and ther sche nom[14]
Bothe of the water and the fom,
The sond, and ek the smale stones —
Whiche as sche ches[15] out for the nones[16];
And of the Rede See a part
That was behovelich[17] to hire art

1 drew
2 ascended
3 drove
4 wheel
5 those
6 parts
7 hie, hasten
8 hills
9 more
10 found
11 sweet
12 shears
13 not
14 took
15 chose
16 nonce
17 needful

6. **Crete**: this reposes upon a *corrupt reading* of the Latin; read perhaps
race.'
9. **Othrin**: Othrys; Medea flies in a circuit about Thessaly.
7. **Eridian**: not the Eridanus (Po), but the Apidanus, one of the tributaries
he Peneus, which flows through the vale of Tempe. — **Amphrisos**: a small
r flowing northeast into the modern Gulf of Volos.
8. **Spercheïdos**: the Spercheius is south of the preceding.
3. **Rede See**: Macaulay suggests that Gower read 'rubrum' for the 'refluum'
vid's line 267.

Sche tok; and, after that, aboute
Sche soughte sondri sedes oute
In feldes, and in many greves[1];
And ek a part sche tok of leves;
Bot thing which mihte hire most availe
Sche fond in Crete[2] and in Thessaile.
In daies and in nyhtes nyne,
With gret travaile and with gret pyne[3]
Sche was pourveid[4] of every piece,
And torneth homward into Grece.
Before the gates of Eson
Hir char sche let awai to gon,
And tok out ferst that was therinne;
For tho sche thoghte to beginne
Such thing as semeth impossible,
And made hirselven invisible,
As sche that was with air enclosed,
And mihte of no man be desclosed.
Sche tok up turves of the lond,
Withoute helpe of mannes hond,
Al heled[5] with the grene gras,
Of which an alter mad ther was
Unto Echates the goddesse
Of art magique and the maistresse,
And eft another to Juvente,[6]
As sche which dede hir hole[7] entente.
Tho tok sche fieldwode[8] and verveyne —
Of herbes ben noght betre tueine —
Of which anon, withoute let,[9]
These alters ben aboute set.
Tuo sondri puttes[10] faste[11] by
Sche made, and with that hastely

[1] groves
[2] See note on l. 6, p. 47
[3] MS. peyne
[4] provided
[5] covered
[6] Youth (Hebe)
[7] whole
[8] woodland-growth; Lat. *silva agresti*, literally translated
[9] hindrance; we still say without let or hindrance
[10] pits
[11] near

A wether which was blak sche slouh,[1]
And out therof the blod sche drouh,
And dede into the pettes[2] tuo;
Warm melk sche putte also therto,
With hony meynd[3]; and in such wise
Sche gan to make hir sacrifice,
And cride and preide forth withal
To Pluto the god infernal,
And to the queene Proserpine.
And so sche soghte out al the line
Of hem that longen[4] to that craft —
Behinde was no name laft —
And preide hem[5] alle, as sche wel couthe,
To grante Eson his ferste youthe.
  This olde Eson broght forth was tho;
Awei sche bad alle othre[6] go
Upon peril that mihte falle;
And with that word thei wenten alle,
And leften there hem tuo alone.
And tho sche gan to gaspe and gone,[7]
And made signes many on,
And seide hir wordes therupon;
So that, with spellinge of hir charmes,
Sche tok Eson in bothe hire armes,
And made him for to slepe faste,
And him upon hire herbes caste.
The blake wether tho sche tok,
And hiewh[8] the fleissh, as doth a cok;
On either alter part sche leide,
And, with the charmes that sche seide,
A fyr doun fro the sky alyhte,
And made it for to brenne lyhte.

1 slew
2 pits
3 mingled
4 belong
5 them
6 others
7 gape
8 hewed

20. The next fifty lines are for the most part original (Macaulay).

Bot whan Medea sawh it brenne,
Anon sche gan to sterte and renne[1]
The fyri aulters al aboute.
Ther was no beste[2] which goth oute
More wylde than sche semeth ther:
Aboute hir schuldres hyng[3] hir her,
As thogh sche were oute of hir mynde,
And torned in another kynde.[4]
Tho lay ther certein wode cleft,
Of which the pieces nou and eft[5]
Sche made hem in the pettes wete,[6]
And put hem in the fyri hete,
And tok the brond with al the blase,
And thries sche began to rase[7]
Aboute Eson, ther as he slepte;
And eft with water, which sche kepte,
Sche made a cercle aboute him thries,
And eft with fyr of sulphre twyes;
Ful many another thing sche dede,
Which is noght writen in this stede.[8]
Bot tho sche ran so up and doun,
Sche made many a wonder[9] soun,[10]
Somtime lich[11] unto the cock,
Somtime unto the laverock,[12]
Somtime kacleth as a hen,
Somtime spekth as don the men;
And riht so as hir jargoun strangeth,[13]
In sondri wise hir forme changeth.
Sche semeth faie,[14] and no womman;
For, with the craftes that sche can,
Sche was, as who seith,[15] a goddesse;
And what hir liste, more or lesse,

1 run
2 beast
3 hung
4 turned to another nature
5 again
6 wet
7 race
8 place
9 wonderful
10 sound
11 like
12 lark
13 grows strange
14 fay, fairy
15 as one might

Sche dede,[1] in bokes as we finde,
That passeth over mannes kinde.[2]
Bot who that wole[3] of wondres hiere —
What thing sche wroghte in this matiere,
To make an ende of that sche gan —
Such merveile herde nevere man.
  Apointed in the newe mone,
Whan it was time for to done,
Sche sette a caldron on the fyr,
In which was al the hole atir[4]
Wheron the medicine stod —
Of jus,[5] of water, and of blod —
And let it buile[6] in such a plit,[7]
Til that sche sawh the spume[8] whyt;
And tho sche caste in rynde and rote,[9]
And sed and flour[10] that was for bote,[11]
With many an herbe and many a ston,
Wherof sche hath ther many on.
And ek Cimpheius the serpent
To hire hath alle his scales lent;
Chelidre hire yaf his addres skin,
And sche to builen caste hem in;
A part ek of the horned oule,
The which men hiere on nyhtes houle;
And of a raven, which was told[12]
Of nyne hundred wynter old,
Sche tok the hed with al the bile[13];
And as the medicine it wile,

1 did
2 surpasses human nature
3 will
4 preparation
5 juice
6 boil
7 manner
8 foam
9 rind and root
10 flower
11 remedy
12 reckoned
13 bill

20. Here the Latin has *nec defuit illic Squamea Cinyphii tenuis membrana chelydri* (*Met.* 7. 271–2), which King translates: 'skin membranous Of Afric's tortoise caught by Cinyps' banks'; Gower quite misunderstands. — Cf. Shakespeare's 'fillet of a fenny snake' (*Macb.* 4. 1. 12).

Of the seewolf,[1] and for the hele[2]
Of Eson, with a thousand mo
Of thinges that sche hadde tho,
In that caldroun togedre, as blyve,[3]
Sche putte, and tok thanne of oly
A drie branche hem with to stere,[4]
The which anon gan floure[5] and bere,
And waxe al freissh and grene ayein.
Whan sche this vertu hadde sein,[6]
Sche let the leste drope of alle
Upon the bare flor doun falle;
Anon ther sprong up flour and gras
Where as the drope falle was,
And wox anon al medwe-grene,[7]
So that it mihte wel be sene.
  Medea thanne knew and wiste
Hir medicine is for to triste,[8]
And goth to Eson ther he lay,
And tok a swerd was of assay,[9]
With which a wounde upon his side
Sche made, that therout mai slyde
The blod withinne, which was old
And sek[10] and trouble[11] and fieble and cold.
And tho sche tok unto his us[12]
Of herbes al the beste jus,
And poured it into his wounde;
That made his veynes fulle and sounde.
And tho sche made his wounde clos,
And tok his hand, and up he ros;

1 shark; Ovid means the werwolf
2 recovery
3 as quickly (as possible)
4 to stir them with
5 flower
6 seen
7 meadow-green
8 trust
9 proof, tried qualit
10 sick
11 turbid
12 use

8. 'And lo! the sere wood in the caldron's heat Grew sudden green, a clad itself with leaves Afresh, and heavy drooped with berried fruit' (Ov tr. King).

And tho sche yaf him drink a drauhte,
Of which his youthe[1] ayein he cauhte,[2]
His hed, his herte, and his visage
Lich unto twenty wynter age.
Hise hore[3] heres[4] were away;
And lich unto the freisshe Maii,
Whan passed ben the colde schoures,[5]
Riht so recovereth he his floures.

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (about 1380) has been called by Gaston Paris the jewel of English mediæval literature (*Hist. Litt. de la France* 30. 73), and by Schofield (*Eng. Lit. from the Conquest to Chaucer*, p. 215) 'incomparably the best of the English romances, and one of the finest in any language.' Of the unknown author Schofield adds: 'Next to Chaucer his contemporary, he is perhaps the greatest of our mediæval poets.'

The romance has been edited by Madden (*Syr Gawayne*), 1839, and by Morris (E.E.T.S. No. 4), 1864 (revised by Gollancz, 1897). For general accounts of the author and his work, see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 357–373 (Gollancz), and Osgood's edition of *The Pearl*, pp. xi, xlvii–lix. A good prose translation is that by K. G. T. Webster (Boston, 1916), and there is a humorous adaptation of the poem in modern verse by Charlton M. Lewis (*Gawayne and the Green Knight: a Fairy Tale*), Boston, 1903.

The story is probably from a French or Anglo-Norman source; for analogues, see Madden's edition, pp. 305–7; M. C. Thomas, *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* (Zurich, 1883), pp. 34–68; Gaston Paris, as above, 30. 75–7; Weston, pp. 88–102; Kittredge, *A Study of Gawain and the Green Knight* (Cambridge, 1916).

The incident of the beheading is found in the *Fled Bricrend* (translated in *Irish Texts Soc.*, Vol. 2), an Irish tale at least as early as 1100, in which the hero Cuchulinn undergoes the test (Gaston Paris, p. 77; Weston, pp. 92 ff.).

It is an interesting fact that Richard de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (1382–1439), a reputed descendant of the legendary Guy of Warwick, and 'a brave and chivalrous warrior in an age of chivalry,' entered the lists at Guines, near Calais, in the character of 'the grene knyght' on Jan. 6 (Twelfth Day) of either 1416 or 1417, and unhorsed a French knight, an exploit which he equaled on the two following days (Kittredge, *Harvard Notes* 5. 94–95). A recent article, dealing with the connection between this poem and the Order of the Garter, by Isaac Jackson, will be found in *Anglia* 37. 393–423; this author

[1] youth
[2] caught
[3] hoar
[4] hairs, hair
[5] showers

believes the date to be 1362. Chambers sees in the Green Knight a form of the fertilization-spirit (*The Mediæval Stage* 1. 117, 185–186).

The language of our author presents peculiar difficulties, as does that of the whole school of alliterative poets which flourished during the second hal of the fourteenth and the early years of the fifteenth centuries. Of this schoo Gollancz (p. 373) considers that he may well have been the master.

The poem is long, and full of incident and description. Its story runs thus While Arthur's court is feasting at Camelot on New Year's Day, a knight all in green, and riding a green charger, rides into the hall. He challenge any knight present to give him a stroke with his battle-axe, on the understand ing that it is to be rendered back to him a year later. All shrink back bu Arthur's nephew, Gawain, who smites off the knight's head, whereupon th latter rides away with the head in his hand. Toward the end of the yea Gawain sets out to find the knight, whom he eventually encounters. Afte various temptations, he endures the return-blow — which, however, inflicts bu a slight wound — and later goes back to Arthur's court. (For more extende analyses, see J. L. Weston, *Legend of Sir Gawain*, pp. 86–88; Schofiel pp. 215–217; *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 364–365; Morris' ed., pp. viii–xxi.)

Morris has thus summarized the part of the poem which precedes our fir extract: 'Arthur, the greatest of Britain's kings, holds the Christmas festiv at Camelot, surrounded by the celebrated knights of the Round Table, . . . an ladies the loveliest that ever had life. This noble company celebrate the Ne Year by a religious service, by the bestowal of gifts, and the most joyous mirt Lords and ladies take their seats at the table — Queen Guenever, the gre eyed, gaily dressed, sits at the dais. . . . Arthur, in mood as joyful as a child, declares that he will not eat nor sit long at the table until some adventuro thing has occurred to mark the return of the New Year.

'The first course [is] announced with cracking of trumpets, with the noi of nakers and noble pipes.'

Our extracts are lines 130–249, 2212–2478. The final *z* (for *s*) at the end words is frequently represented in the MS. by ȝ; here it is uniformly printed as

Now wyl I of hor[1] servise say yow no more,
For uch[2] wyȝe[3] may wel wite[4] no wont[5] þat þer were;
Anoþer noyse ful newe neȝed[6] bilive,[7]
Þat þe lude[8] myȝt haf leve liflode[9] to cach.[10]
For uneþe[11] watz[12] þe noyce[13] not a whyle[14] sesed,[15]
And þe fyrst cource in þe court kyndely[16] served,

1 their
2 each
3 man
4 know
5 want
6 drew nigh
7 on a sudden
8 people
9 food
10 take
11 scarcely
12 was
13 noise (with which the first cou was announced)
14 but just
15 ceased
16 duly

Þer hales[1] in at þe halle-dor an aghlich[2] mayster,[3]
On[4] þe most[5] on þe molde[6] on mesure hyghe;
Fro þe swyre[7] to þe swange[8] so sware[9] and so þik,
And his lyndes[10] and his lymes so longe and so grete,
Half etayn[11] in erde[12] I hope[13] þat he were.
Bot mon most I algate[14] mynn[15] hym to bene,
And þat þe myriest[16] in his muckel[17] þat myȝt ride;
For of bak and of brest al[18] were his bodi sturne,[19]
Bot[20] his wombe[21] and his wast were worthily smale,
And alle his fetures[22] folȝande,[23] in forme þat he hade,
Ful clene[24];
For wonder of his hue[25] men hade,
Set in his semblaunt[26] sene[27];
He ferde[28] as[29] freke[30] were fade,[31]
And overal[32] enker-grene.[33]

Ande al grayþed[34] in grene þis gome[35] and his wedes,[36]
A strayt[37] cote[38] ful streȝt,[39] þat stek on[40] his sides,
A mere[41] mantile abof, mensked[42] withinne,
With pelure[43] pured[44] apert[45] þe pane[46] ful clene,[47]
With blyþe[48] blaunner[49] ful bryȝt, and his hod[50] boþe,
Þat watz laȝt[51] fro his lokkez, and layde on his schulderes;
Heme[52] wel haled,[53] hose of þat same grene,

1 rushes
2 terrible
3 lord
4 one
5 largest
6 mold, earth
7 neck
8 loins
9 square
10 loins
11 giant (OE. *eoten*)
12 earth
13 believe
14 nevertheless
15 think
16 most agreeable (?)
17 bigness
18 though
19 stalwart
20 yet
21 belly
22 parts of his body
23 accordingly
24 fine
25 MS. hwe
26 appearance
27 plain, manifest
28 acted
29 like
30 man
31 vigorous
32 all over
33 dark (inky) green
34 arrayed
35 man
36 apparel
37 tight-fitting
38 tunic
39 (?)
40 clung to
41 beautiful (OE. *mǣre*)
42 adorned
43 fur
44 shorn close, so as to show only one color
45 evidently
46 cloth
47 fair
48 gay
49 (white?) fur
50 hood
51 caught
52 border
53 trimmed (?)

Þat spenet[1] on his sparlyr,[2] and clene spures under,
Of bryȝt golde upon silk bordes[3] barred ful ryche,[4]
And scholes[5] under schankes,[6] þere þe schalk[7] rides;
And alle his vesture verayly watz clene verdure,[8]
Boþe þe barres of his belt and oþer blyþe stones,
Þat were richely rayled[9] in his aray clene,
Aboutte hymself and his sadel, upon silk werkez.[10]
Þat were to tor[11] for to telle of tryfles þe halue,[12]
Þat were enbrauded[13] abof wyth bryddes and flyȝes,[14]
With gay gaudi[15] grene,[16] þe golde ay in myddes.
Þe pendauntes of his payttrure,[17] þe proude cropure,[18]
His molaynes,[19] and alle þe metail anamayld[20] was þenne;
Þe steropes þat he stod on stayned of þe same,
And his arsounz[21] al after, and his aþel[22] sturtes,[23]
Þat ever glemered[24] and glent[25] al of grene stones.
Þe fole[26] þat he ferkkes[27] on, fyn[28] of þat ilke,[29]
Sertayn[30];
A grene hors gret and þikke,
A stede ful stif to strayne,[31]
In brawden[32] brydel quik,[33]
To þe gome he watz ful gayn.[34]

Wel gay watz þis gome gered[35] in grene,
And þe here of his hed of his hors swete[36];
Fayre fannand[37] fax[38] umbefoldes[39] his schulderes;
A much[40] berd as a busk[41] over his brest henges,

1 fastened
2 calf
3 edges
4 richly
5 (?)
6 legs
7 man
8 pure green
9 disposed
10 works
11 too tedious
12 half
13 embroidered
14 flies
15 yellowish
16 MS. of grene
17 poitrel, horse's breastplate
18 crupper
19 bits
20 enameled
21 saddle-bows
22 noble
23 stirrups (?)
24 gleamed
25 sparkled
26 foal, steed
27 pushes forward
28 fine, choice
29 same (color)
30 certainly
31 curb
32 embroidered
33 lively
34 obedient
35 arrayed
36 fine
37 waving
38 hair
39 falls about
40 great
41 bush

Þat wyth his hiȝlich[1] here, þat of his hed reches,
Watz evesed[2] al umbetorne,[3] abof his elbowes,
Þat half his armes þerunder were halched[4] in þe wyse
Of a kyngez capados,[5] þat closes[6] his swyre.
Þe mane of þat mayn[7] hors much to hit lyke,
Wel cresped[8] and cemmed[9] wyth knottes ful mony,
Folden in wyth fildore[10] aboute þe fayre grene,
Ay a[11] herle[12] of þe here, anoþer of golde;
Þe tayl and his toppyng[13] twynnen[14] of a sute,[15]
And bounden boþe wyth a bande of a bryȝt grene,
Dubbed[16] wyth ful dere stonez, as þe dok lasted,[17]
Syþen[18] þrawen[19] wyth a þwong[20] a þwarle[21] knot alofte,
Þer mony bellez ful bryȝt of brende[22] golde rungen.
Such a fole upon folde,[23] ne freke þat hym rydes,
Watz never sene in þat sale[24] wyth syȝt er þat tyme,
With yȝe[25];
He loked as layt[26] so lyȝt,[27]
So sayd al þat hym syȝe,[28]
Hit semed as no mon myȝt
Under his dynttez[29] dryȝe.[30]

Wheþer[31] hade he no helme ne hawb[e]rgh nauþer,[32]
Ne no pysan,[33] ne no plate þat pented[34] to armes,
Ne no schafte,[35] ne no schelde, to schune[36] ne to smyte,
Bot in his on[37] honde he hade a holyn bobbe,[38]
Þat is grattest[39] in grene when grevez[40] ar bare,

1 splendid
2 clipped
3 around
4 enlaced (with the hair)
5 hood
6 encloses
7 great
8 crisped
9 combed
10 gold thread
11 one
12 filament, hair
13 crest (mane)
14 matched
15 kind
16 adorned
17 as far as the dock (fleshy part) extended
18 beyond that point
19 twisted
20 thong
21 tight (?)
22 burnished
23 earth
24 hall
25 eye
26 lightning
27 bright
28 saw
29 strokes
30 endure
31 yet
32 neither
33 gorget
34 pertained
35 spear
36 protect; MS. schwne
37 one
38 holly-branch
39 most pronounced
40 groves

And an ax in his oþer, a hoge [1] and unmete,[2]
A spetos [3] sparþe [4] to expoun in spelle quoso myȝt [5];
Þe hede of an elnȝerde,[6] þe large lenkþe [7] hade,
Þe grayn [8] al of grene stele and of golde hewen,
Þe bit [9] burnyst bryȝt, with a brod egge,[10]
As wel schapen to schere [11] as scharp rasores;
Þe stele [12] of a stif staf þe sturne [13] hit [14] bigrypte,[15]
Þat watz wounden [16] wyth yrn to þe wandez [17] ende,
And al bigraven [18] with grene, in gracious [19] werkes [20];
A lace [21] lapped aboute, þat louked [22] at þe hede,
And so after [23] þe halme [24] halched [25] ful ofte,
Wyth tryed [26] tasselez þerto [27] tacched [28] innoghe [29]
On [30] botounz [31] of þe bryȝt grene brayden [32] ful ryche.
Þis haþel [33] heldez hym in,[34] and þe halle entres,
Drivande to þe heȝe dece,[35] dut [36] he no woþe,[37]
Haylsed [38] he never one, bot heȝe he overloked.[39]
Þe fyrst word þat he warp [40]: 'Wher is,' he sayd,
'Þe governour of þis gyng [41]? Gladly I wolde
Se þat segg [42] in syȝt, and with hymself speke
Raysoun.'

To knyȝtez he kest [43] his yȝe,
And reled [44] hym up and doun,
He stemmed,[45] and con [46] studie
Quo [47] walt [48] þer most renoun.

1 huge
2 immense
3 cruel
4 sparth, battle-axe
5 whoever might try to make it clear in speech
6 ell (long)
7 length
8 blade
9 cutting end
10 edge
11 shear
12 handle
13 firmly
14 it (the axe-head)
15 gripped, clasped
16 MS. waunden
17 wand's, handle's
18 engraved
19 charming
20 devices
21 cord
22 had a fastening
23 along
24 haulm, stalk (i.e. handle)
25 caught
26 choice
27 to the cord
28 attached
29 sufficiently; MS. innoghee
30 by means of
31 buttons
32 braided (i.e. the buttons)
33 noble
34 takes his wa
35 dais
36 feared
37 injury
38 saluted
39 looked (lo
40 flung
41 company
42 man
43 cast
44 strode
45 halted
46 began
47 who
48 bore

Ther watz lokyng on lenþe,[1] þe lude[2] to beholde,
For uch mon had mervayle quat hit mene myȝt,
Þat a haþel and a horse myȝt such a hue lach,[3]
As growe grene[4] as þe gres — and grener hit semed,
Þen[5] grene aumayl[6] on golde lowande[7] bryȝter.
Al studied þat þer stod, and stalked hym nerre,[8]
Wyth al þe wonder of[9] þe worlde, what he worch[10] schulde.
For fele[11] sellyez[12] had þay sen, bot such never are,[13]
Forþi[14] for fantoum and fayryȝe[15] þe folk þer hit demed;
Þerfore to answare watz arȝe[16] mony aþel[17] freke,[18]
And al stouned[19] at his steven,[20] and ston-stil seten[21]
In a swoghe[22] sylence þurȝ þe sale[23] riche,
As al were slypped upon[24] slepe — so slaked[25] hor[26] lotez[27] —
In hyȝe[28];
I deme hit not[29] al for doute,[30]
Bot sum[31] for cortaysye —
Bot let[32] hym[33] þat al schulde loute[34]
Cast[35] unto þat wyȝe.[36]

247.

When the time of the return visit approaches (see introductory note), Gawain sets out, and on Christmas Eve reaches a castle, where he is hospitably received by its lord and lady. Here he learns that the Green Chapel, his destination, is only two miles distant, and accordingly accepts an invitation to stay till New Year's morning. During the host's hunting-expeditions, his wife makes love to Gawain, but is unsuccessful in her endeavors; the kisses she bestows upon him are by him passed on to the host at nightfall. However, Gawain does accept from the lady a green girdle, which is to render him secure from every danger. On his resort to the Green Chapel, he hears the sound as of a blade sharpened on a grindstone.

1 for a long time
2 man
3 obtain
4 as to grow as green
5 than
6 enamel
7 shining
8 nearer
9 in
10 do
11 many
12 wonders
13 before
14 wherefore
15 enchantment
16 timid
17 noble
18 knight
19 were astonished
20 voice
21 sat
22 impotent, dead
23 hall
24 as if all had slipped (slid) into sleep
25 relaxed (*or* subdued)
26 their
27 features (*or* looks; *possibly* voices)
28 haste
29 was not
30 fear
31 but that some were silent
32 but that they let
33 Arthur
34 reverence
35 make advances (?)
36 champion

Gederez up hys grymme tole,[1] Gawayn to smyte;
With alle þe bur[2] in his body he ber hit on lofte,[3]
Munt[4] as maȝtyly as[5] marre hym he wolde;
Hade hit dryven adoun as dreȝ[6] as he atled,[7]
Þer hade[8] ben ded of his dynt þat[9] doȝty watz ever.
Bot Gawayn on þat giserne[10] glyfte[11] hym bysyde,
As hit com glydande adoun, on glode[12] hym to schende,[13]
And schranke a lytel with þe schulderes, for þe scharp yrn
Þat oþer schalk[14] wyth a schunt[15] þe schene[16] wythhaldez,
And þenne repreved he þe prynce with mony prowde word
'Þou art not Gawayn,' quoth þe gome, 'þat is so goud[17] h
Þat never arȝed[18] for no here,[19] by hylle ne be vale,
And now þou fles for ferde,[20] er þou fele harmez[21];
Such cowardise of þat knyȝt cowþe[22] I never here.
Nawþer fyked[23] I ne flaȝe,[24] freke, quen þou myntest,[25]
Ne kest[26] no kavelacoun[27] in kyngez hous Arthor,[28]
My hede flaȝ[29] to my fote, and ȝet flaȝ I never;
And þou, er any harme hent,[30] arȝez in hert,
Wherfore þe better burne me burde[31] be called
Þerfore.'
Quoth Gawayn: 'I schunt[32] onez,
And so wyl I no more;
Bot þaȝ[33] my hede falle on þe stonez,
I con not hit restore.[34]

[1] tool, weapon
[2] force
[3] aloft
[4] threatened
[5] as if
[6] straight
[7] aimed
[8] would have
[9] he who
[10] axe
[11] looked
[12] its passage (?)
[13] destroy
[14] man
[15] slant
[16] bright (blade)
[17] brave
[18] trembled
[19] host
[20] fear
[21] before thou art much hurt
[22] could
[23] flinched
[24] fled
[25] didst aim
[26] raised
[27] objection
[28] genitive case
[29] flew
[30] seized
[31] I ought to
[32] dodged
[33] though
[34] (as the Green K

Bot busk,[1] burne,[2] bi þi fayth, and bryng me to þe poynt,
Dele to me my destine, and do hit out of honde,
For I schal stonde þe a strok, and start[3] no more,
Til þyn ax have me hitte — haf here my trawþe.'
'Haf at þe þenne,' quoth þat oþer, and heves hit alofte,
And waytez[4] as wroþely as he wode were;
He myntez[5] at hym maȝtyly,[6] bot not þe mon ryvez,[7]
Withhelde heterly[8] h[i]s honde, er hit hurt myȝt.
Gawayn grayþely[9] hit bydez, and glent[10] with no membre,
Bot stode stylle as þe ston, oþer[11] a stubbe auþer,[12]
Þat raþeled[13] is in roche[14] grounde, with rotez a hundreth.
Þen muryly efte con[15] he mele,[16] þe mon in þe grene:
'So now þou hatz þi hert holle,[17] hitte me bihov[e]s;
Halde þe now þe hyȝe[18] hode[19] þat Arþur þe raȝt,[20]
And kepe[21] þy kanel[22] at þis kest,[23] ȝif hit[24] kever[25] may.'
Gawayn ful gryndelly[26] with greme[27] þenne sayde,
'Wy þresch on, þou þro[28] mon, þou þretez to longe,
I hope[29] þat þi hert arȝe[30] wyth þyn awen selven.'
'Forsoþe,' quoth þat oþer freke,[31] 'so felly[32] þou spekez,
I wyl no lenger on lyte[33] lette[34] þin ernde[35]
Riȝte nowe.'
Þenne tas[36] he hym stryþe[37] to stryke,
And frounses[38] boþe lyppe and browe.
No mervayle þaȝ hym[39] myslyke,
Þat hoped of no rescowe.[40]

1 make ready
2 man
3 flinch
4 attends
5 aims
6 lustily
7 gashes
8 with a jerk
9 duly
10 shrank
11 or
12 either
13 twisted
14 rocky
15 did
16 speak
17 whole
18 high
19 hood
20 gave (reached)
21 guard
22 neck
23 blow
24 the hood
25 cover (the neck)
26 roughly
27 anger
28 fierce
29 suspect
30 grows cowardly
31 man
32 rudely
33 tarrying
34 delay
35 business
36 takes
37 stride (firm position on his feet)
38 wrinkles
39 Gawain
40 rescue

He lyftes lyȝtly his lome,[1] and let hit doun fayre,[2]
With þe barbe of þe bitte[3] bi þe bare nek;
Þaȝ he homered[4] heterly,[5] hurt hym no more,
Bot snyrt[6] hym on þat on syde, þat severed þe hyde;
Þe scharp[7] schrank[8] to þe flesche þurȝ þe schyre[9] grece,[10]
Þat þe schene[11] blod over his schulderes schot to þe erþe;
And quen þe burne seȝ þe blode blenk[12] on þe snawe,
He sprit[13] forth spenne-fote,[14] more þen a spere lenþe,
Hent[15] heterly[5] his helme, and on his hed cast,
Schot[16] with his schulderez his fayre schelde under,
Braydez[17] out a bryȝt sworde, and bremely[18] he spekez;
Never syn þat he watz burne borne of his moder,
Watz he never in þis worlde wyȝe[19] half so blyþe[20]:
'Blynne,[21] burne, of þy bur,[22] bede[23] me no mo;
I haf a stroke in þis sted withoute stryf hent,[24]
And if þow rechez[25] me any mo, I redyly schal quyte,[26]
And ȝelde ȝederly[27] aȝayn, and þerto ȝe tryst,[28]
And foo[29];
Bot on stroke here me fallez,[30]
Þe covenaunt schap[31] ryȝt soo,
[Sikered][32] in Arþurez hallez,
And þerfore hende now hoo[33]!'

The haþel[34] heldet[35] hym fro, and on his ax rested,
Sette þe schaft upon schore,[36] and to þe scharp lened,
And loked to þe leude[37] þat on þe launde[38] ȝede,
How þat doȝty dredles dervely[39] þer stondez,

1 weapon
2 full
3 blade
4 smote
5 swiftly
6 wounded (?)
7 axe
8 pierced
9 bright
10 grease (fleshy part of the neck)
11 bright
12 shine
13 started
14 swift-foot (?)
15 grasped
16 slipped
17 draws
18 boldly
19 man
20 glad
21 stop
22 onslaught
23 attempt
24 accepted
25 dealest (handest me out)
26 requite, retaliate
27 promptly
28 make up yo
29 (?)
30 is due
31 directed
32 ratified
33 stop
34 knight
35 turned away
36 earth
37 man
38 plain
39 bravely

Armed ful aȝlez[1]; in hert hit hym lykez.
Þenn he melez muryly, wyth a much steven,[2]
And wyth a r[a]ykande[3] rurde[4] he to þe renk[5] sayde:
'Bolde burne,[6] on þis bent[7] be not so gryndel[8];
No mon here unmanerly þe mysboden[9] habbe,
Ne kyd,[10] bot as covenaunde,[11] at kyngez kort[12] schaped[13];
I hyȝt[14] þe a strok, and þou hit hatz; halde þe wel payed;
I relece þe of þe remnaunt, of ryȝtes alle oþer;
Ȝif I deliver[15] had bene, a boffet, paraunter,
I couþe wroþeloker[16] haf waret,[17] [and] to þe haf wroȝt anger.
Fyrst I mansed[18] þe muryly, with a mynt[19] one,[20]
And rove[21] þe wyth no rof,[22] sore[23] with ryȝt I þe profered,
For þe forwarde þat we fest[24] in þe fyrst nyȝt,
And þou trystyly þe trawþe and trwly me haldez,
Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon schulde;
Þat oþer munt[25] for þe morne, mon,[26] I þe profered,
Þou kyssedes my clere[27] wyf, þe cossez[28] me raȝtez,[29]
For boþe two here[30] I þe bede bot two bare myntes,
Boute scaþe[31];
Trwe mon[32] trwe restore,
Þenne þar mon[32] drede no waþe[33];
At þe þrid þou fayled þore,[34]
And þerfor þat tappe[35] ta þe.[36]

For hit is my wede[37] þat þou werez, þat ilke woven girdel,
Myn owen wyf hit þe weved, I wot wel forsoþe;
Now know I wel þy cosses, and þy costes[38] als,[39]

1 fearless
2 great voice
3 rushing, loud
4 sound
5 knight
6 man
7 field
8 fierce, angry
9 offered wrong
10 treated
11 agreed upon
12 court
13 arranged
14 promised
15 nimble
16 more fiercely
17 dealt
18 menaced
19 aimed blow
20 only
21 cleaved
22 cut, blow
23 wound
24 pledged
25 aimed blow
26 man
27 fair
28 kisses
29 gavest
30 both of these two
31 without injury
32 must
33 danger, injury
34 there
35 stroke
36 take to thyself
37 garment
38 qualities
39 also

And þe wowyng of my wyf, I wroȝt it myselven;
I sende[1] hir to asay[2] þe, and, sothly me þynkkez,
On[3] þe fautlest[4] freke þat ever on fote ȝede[5];
As perle bi[6] þe quite[7] pese[8] is of prys more,
So is Gawayn, in god fayth, bi oþer gay knyȝtez.
Bot here yow lakked a lyttel, syr, and lewte[9] yow wonted,[10]
Bot þat watz for no wylyde[11] werke, ne wowyng nauþer,
Bot for ȝe lufud your lyf, — þe lasse I yow blamé.'
Þat oþer stif[12] mon in study stod a gret whyle;
So agreved for greme[13] he gryed[14] withinne,
Alle þe blode of his brest blende[15] in his face,
Þat al he schrank for schome, þat[16] þe schalk talked.
Þe forme[17] worde upon folde[18] þat þe freke meled:
'Corsed worth[19] cowarddyse and covetyse boþe!
In yow is vylany and vyse, þat vertue disstryez.'
Þenne he kaȝt to[20] þe knot, and þe kest[21] lawsez,[22]
Brayde[23] broþely[24] þe belt to þe burne selven:
'Lo! þer þe falssyng,[25] foule mot hit falle![26]
For care[27] of þy knokke, cowardyse me taȝt
To acorde me with covetyse, my kynde[28] to forsake,
Þat is larges[29] and lewte, þat longez to[30] knyȝtez.
Now am I fawty,[31] and falce, and ferde[32] haf been ever;
Of trecherye and untrawþe boþe bityde[33] sorȝe[34]
And care!
I biknowe yow,[35] knyȝt, here stylle,
Al fawty is my fare[36];

[1] sent
[2] try, tempt
[3] one
[4] the most faultless
[5] went (OE. *ēode*)
[6] compared with
[7] white
[8] peas
[9] loyalty
[10] lacked
[11] wily, intriguing
[12] brave
[13] vexation, anger
[14] was agitated
[15] blent, mingled
[16] while
[17] first
[18] earth
[19] be
[20] seized hold of
[21] twist
[22] looses
[23] threw
[24] angrily
[25] falsity
[26] may foul befall
[27] fear
[28] nature
[29] generosity
[30] befits
[31] faulty
[32] afeared
[33] come
[34] sorrow
[35] confess to you
[36] conduct

Letez me overtake[1] your wylle,
And efte[2] I schal beware.'

Thenn loȝe[3] þat oþer leude, and luflyly[4] sayde,
'I halde hit hardily[5] hole,[6] þe harme þat I hade;
Þou art confessed so clene, beknowen of þy mysses,[7]
And hatz þe penaunce apert,[8] of[9] þe poynt of myn egge,[10]
I halde þe polysed[11] of þat plyȝt,[12] and pured[13] as clene,
As[14] þou hadez never forfeted[15] syþen þou watz fyrst borne.
And I gif þe, syr, þe gurdel þat is golde hemmed;
For hit is grene as my goune, syr Gawayn, ȝe maye
Þenk upon þis ilke þrepe,[16] þer[17] þou forth þryngez[18]
Among prynces of prys, and[19] þis a pure token
Of þe chaunce[20] of þe grene chapel, at[21] chevalrous knyȝtez;
And ȝe schal in þis nwe ȝer aȝayn[22] to my wonez,[23]
And we schyn[24] revel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest,
Ful bene.'[25]
Þer laþed[26] hym fast[27] þe lorde,
And sayde: 'With my wyf, I wene,
We schal yow wel acorde,[28]
Þat watz your enmy kene.'

'Nay, forsoþe,' quoth þe segge,[29] and sesed[30] hys helme,
And hatz hit of[31] hendely,[32] and þe haþel[33] þonkkez:
'I haf sojorned sadly, sele[34] yow bytyde,
And He ȝelde[35] hit ȝow ȝare,[36] þat ȝarkkez[37] al menskes[38]!

1 understand
2 afterwards
3 laughed
4 courteously
5 assuredly
6 cured
7 with avowal made of thy sins
8 openly, manifestly
9 from
10 (edge of) axe
11 absolved
12 offense
13 purged
14 as if
15 sinned
16 reproof, rebuke
17 when
18 dost crowd, press
19 and keep
20 adventure
21 on the part of
22 come again
23 dwelling
24 shall
25 genially
26 invited
27 urgently
28 bring into friendly relations
29 knight
30 seized
31 off
32 courteously
33 warrior
34 blessing, prosperity
35 may he reward you for it
36 soon
37 bestows
38 honors

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Þat oþer stif[12] mon in study stod a gret whyle;
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[20] seized hold of
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[24] angrily
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[26] may foul befall it
[27] fear
[28] nature
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28 bring into friendly rela
29 knight
30 seized
31 off
32 courteously
33 warrior
34 blessing, prosperity
35 may he reward you fo
36 soon
37 bestows
38 honors

And comaundez[1] me to þat cortays, your comlych[2] fere,[3]
Boþe þat on and þat oþer, myn honoured ladyez,
Þat þus hor knyȝt wyth hor kest[4] han koyntly[5] bigyled.
Bot hit is no ferly,[6] þaȝ a fole madde,[7]
And þurȝ wyles of wymmen be wonen to sorȝe;
For so watz Adam in erde[8] with one bygyled,
And Salamon with fele sere,[9] and Samson eftsonez,[10]
Dalyda[11] dalt[12] hym hys wyrde,[13] and Davyth þerafter
Watz blended[14] with Barsabe,[15] þat much bale[16] þoled.[17]
Now þese were wrathed[18] wyth her wyles, hit were a wynne[19] huge
To luf hom wel, and leve[20] hem not — a leude þat couþe[21] —
For þes wer forne[22] þe freest[23] þat folȝed alle þe sele,
Exellently of alle þyse oþer[24] under hevenryche
Þat mused[25];
And alle þay were biwyled,[26]
With wymmen þat þay used[27];
Þaȝ I be now bigyled,
Me þink me burde[28] be excused.'

'Bot your gordel,' quoth Gawayn — 'God yow forȝelde[29]! —
Þat wyl I welde[30] wyth good wylle, not for þe wynne[31] golde,
Ne þe saynt,[32] ne þe sylk, ne þe syde[33] pendaundes,[34]
For wele,[35] ne for worchyp, ne for þe wlonk[36] werkkez,
Bot in syngne of my surfet[37] I schal se hit ofte;
When I ride in renoun, remorde[38] to myselven
Þe faut and þe fayntyse[39] of þe flesche crabbed,[40]

1 commend
2 comely
3 mate
4 stratagem
5 cunningly
6 wonder
7 grew mad
8 on earth
9 many different ones
10 moreover, likewise
11 Delilah
12 dealt
13 fate, doom
14 mingled, wedded
15 Bathsheba
16 grief
17 suffered
18 vexed
19 joy
20 believe
21 were a man but able
22 of old
23 noblest
24 beyond (excelling) all others
25 indulged their fancies (?)
26 beguiled
27 dealt with
28 it is fitting for me
29 requite
30 keep in possession
31 goodly (?)
32 samite
33 long
34 pendants
35 good fortune
36 beautiful
37 fault, sin
38 I shall blame
39 faintness, weakness
40 perverse (?)

How tender[1] hit is to entyse[2] teches[3] of fylþe[4];
And þus, quen[5] pryde schal me pryk, for prowes of armes,
Þe loke to[6] þis luf[7] lace schal leþe[8] my hert.
Bot on[9] I wolde yow pray, displeses[10] yow never;
Syn[11] ȝe be lorde of the ȝonder londe, þer I haf lent[12] inne
Wyth yow wyth worschyp — þe Wyȝe[13] hit yow ȝelde
Þat uphaldez þe heven, and on hyȝ[14] sittez! —
How norne[15] ȝe yowre ryȝt nome, and þenne no more?'
'Þat schal I telle þe trwly,' quoth þat oþer þenne,
'Bernlak de Hautdesert I hat[16] in þis londe,
Þurȝ myȝt of Morgne la Faye (þat in my hous lenges)[17]
And koyntyse[18] of clergye[19] bi craftes wel lerned,
Þe maystres of Merlyn mony hatz[20] taken;
For ho hatz dalt drwry[21] ful dere sum tyme
With þat conable[22] klerk þat knowes alle your knyȝtez
At hame;
Morgne þe goddes,
Þerfore hit is hir name;
Weldez[23] non so hyȝe hawtesse,[24]
Þat ho ne con make ful tame.[25]

Ho wayned[26] me upon þis wyse to your wynne[27] halle,
For to assay þe surquidre,[28] ȝif hit soth were,
Þat rennes[29] of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table;
Ho wayned me, þis wonder, your wyttez to reve,[30]
For to haf greved Gaynour,[31] and gart hir to dyȝe,[32]
With gopnyng[33] of þat ilke gomen,[34] þat gostlych speked,
With his hede in his honde, bifore þe hyȝe table.

1 frail, weak
2 acquire, catch
3 spots, stains, blemishes
4 foulness, sin
5 when
6 at
7 dear, precious
8 soften
9 one thing
10 if it displease
11 since
12 dwelt
13 Being
14 high
15 say
16 am called
17 dwells
18 (her) cunning
19 learning
20 MS. ho
21 carried on amours
22 competent
23 possesses
24 dignity, power
25 submissive
26 sent
27 goodly (?)
28 pride
29 runs, is told
30 take away
31 Guinevere
32 die
33 fear
34 laughing-stock

Þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian[1] lady;
Ho is even þyn aunt, Arþurez half suster,
Þe duches doȝter of Tyntagelle,[2] þat dere[3] Uter[4] after
Hade Arþur upon,[5] þat aþel[6] is nowþe.[7]
Þerfore I eþe[8] þe, haþel, to com to þyn aunt,
Make myry in my hous, my meny þe lovies,
And I wol[9] þe as wel, wyȝe, bi my faythe,
As any gome under God, for þy grete trauþe.'
And he nikked hym naye,[10] he nolde bi no wayes.
Þay acolen[11] and kyssen, [bikennen] ayþer oþer[12]
To þe Prynce of Paradise, and parten ryȝt þere,
On coolde[13];
Gawayn on blonk[14] ful bene,
To þe kyngez burȝ[15] buskez[16] bolde,
And þe knyȝt in þe enker[17] grene,
Whiderwarde so ever he wolde.

THOMAS OF ERCELDOUNE

There was a Thomas Rimor (Rymour) of Erceldoune (modern Earlston) i[n] the thirteenth century, a Scotchman who obtained in the following century th[e] reputation of a prophet. He cannot, however, have been the author of ou[r] romance, which must have been composed after 1401, and is assigned by th[e] *New English Dictionary* to about 1425. The romance consists of three cantos of which the first is devoted to the fairy tale here following, and the secon[d] and third to prophecies, or what purport to be such. Child thought that th[e] prophecies were by an inferior hand, but Murray believes the whole romanc[e] to have been the work of a single poet. Curiously enough, the story is tol[d] partly in the first person, and partly in the third.

A ballad, founded on the romance (see Murray's edition, pp. lii, liii), i[s] No. 37 of Child's collection, of which the first stanza runs in one version:

True Thomas lay oer yond grassy bank,
And he beheld a ladie gay,
A ladie that was brisk and bold,
Come riding oer the fernie brae.

[1] ancient
[2] the daughter of the Duchess of Tintagel
[3] noble
[4] Uther
[5] by
[6] noble
[7] now
[8] ask, bid
[9] wish
[10] refused him
[11] embrace
[12] commend each the othe[r]
[13] in the open (?)
[14] steed (*lit.* white steed)
[15] fortress
[16] hastens
[17] dark (inky) green

Thomas still retains his power over the imaginations of men. Professor Dixon, of the University of Glasgow, has written a little play, called *Thomas the Rhymer* (Glasgow, 1911), and Kipling's *Last Rhyme of True Thomas* (1893) is one of his most spirited poems.

The scene of the poem is best described by Sir James Murray (pp. l, li of his edition): 'Eildon Tree, referred to in the Romance, and connected traditionally with Thomas's prophecies, stood on the declivity of the eastern of the three Eildon Hills. . . . Its site is believed to be indicated by the *Eildon Stone*, "a rugged boulder of whinstone" standing on the edge of the road from Melrose to St Boswell's, about a mile south-east from the former town, and on the ridge of a spur of the hill. "The view from this point," says a correspondent, "is unsurpassed; on the north you have the vale of Leader almost up to Earlston, and Cowdenknowes with its 'Black Hill' rising abruptly from the bed of the stream; while downward to Tweed the undulating expanse of woody bank is so beautiful, that in the time of the 'bonny broom,' I am often tempted to bend my steps to the spot, and 'lie and watch the sight,' from a spot once 'underneath the Eildon Tree.' In the close vicinity is the 'Bogle Burn,' a stream which rises on the slope of the Eastern Eildon, and flows down a deep glen into the Tweed a little to the north of Newtown St Boswell's." . . . About half a mile to the west of the Eildon Stone, and on the slope of the same hill, we find the "Huntlee bankis" of the old romance. The spot lies a little above the North British Railway, at the point where it is crossed by the road to St Boswell's already referred to, about a quarter of a mile after leaving Melrose Station. The field next the road and railway at this point (No. 2405 on the Ordnance Map) is called *Monks' Meadow*; and higher up the hill above this are two fields (Nos. 2548 and 2408) which have preserved the name of Huntlie Brae.'

The ordnance map in question is that of the Parish of Melrose (May, 1861), Sheet VIII. 5. The road leaves the market-place, and leads to Oakendean House; it touches a corner of 2405 just after it crosses the railway and strikes a little southeast. No. 2408 is directly south of 2405, about 120 yards from the road, by way of a row of trees. No. 2548 is directly south of 2408, and about 150 yards further. Directly east of 2548 is Corse Rig (2410), with a plantation of trees.

Sir Walter Scott's enthusiasm for the story is best shown by a passage or two from Basil Hall's journal for Dec. 30, 1824, as quoted in Lockhart's life of Scott: 'This morning Major Stisted, my brother, and I, accompanied Sir Walter Scott on a walk over his grounds, a distance of five or six miles. . . . Occasionally he repeated snatches of songs, sometimes a whole ballad, and at other times he planted his staff in the ground and related some tale to us, which, though not in verse, came like a stream of poetry from his lips. Thus, about the middle of our walk, we had first to cross, and then to wind down the banks of the Huntly Burn, the scene of old Thomas the Rhymer's interview with the Queen of the Fairies. Before entering this little glen, he detained us on the heath above till he had related the whole of that romantic story, so that

by the time we descended the path, our imaginations were so worked upon by the wild nature of the fiction, and still more by the animation of the narrator, that we felt ourselves treading upon classical ground; and though the day was cold, the path muddy and scarcely passable, owing to the late floods, and the trees all bare, yet I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this mighty magician had rendered this narrow ravine, which in any other company would have seemed quite insignificant. . . . In the evening, . . . Sir Walter also read us, with the utmost delight, . . . the famous *poem on Thomas the Rhymer's adventure with the Queen of the Fairies*; but I am at a loss to say which was the most interesting, or even I will say poetical — his conversational account of it to us to-day on the very spot, Huntly Burn, or the highly characteristic ballad which he read to us in the evening.' On Scott's transfer of his supposititious 'Rhymer's Glen' to the Abbotsford estate, see Murray's edition, p. lii.

The complete romance exists in four manuscripts, of which the oldest and best, the Thornton MS. of Lincoln Cathedral, dates from 1430–1440. All were admirably edited by Dr. Murray in 1875 for the Early English Text Society (No. 61). Another edition, with a reconstructed text, is that by Professor Brandl (Berlin, 1880), with copious variants. The present text reposes upon the Thornton manuscript, as printed by Murray, but the spelling has been somewhat normalized, and an attempt has been made to eliminate certain manifest errors; this, therefore, is a restored text, and can not be depended upon for the exact manuscript readings. The editions of Murray and Brandl can be relied upon for detailed information upon all matters of interest.

Als I me[1] went þis endres[2] day,
Full fast in mynd makand my mone,
In a mery mornyng of May,
By Huntlee bankes myself allone,

I herd þe jay and þe þrostell[3];
The mavys[4] menyde hir[5] in hir song;
Þe wodewale[6] beryde[7] als[8] a bell,
That all þe wode abowt me rong.

Allone in longyng als I lay,
Undyrnethe a semely tree,
Saw I whare a lady gay
Came ridand over a lufly lee.[9]

[1] by myself
[2] other
[3] throstle
[4] song-thrush
[5] bemoaned herself
[6] wood-lark (Murray); according to others, the yaffle, or green woodpecker

If I solde sytt to Domesday,
With my tonge to wrobbe and wrye,[1]
Certanely þat lady gay
Never bese scho discryved[2] for mee.

Hir palfray was a dappill-gray —
Swylk one ne sagh[3] I never none.
Als dose þe sonne on someres day,
Þat faire lady hirself scho schone.

Hir selle[4] it was of roell bone[5] —
Semely was þat syght to see! —
Stefly sett with precyous stone,
And compast all with crapotee,[6]

With stones of Oryent, grete plente.
Hir hare abowt hir hede it hang.
Scho rade over þat lufly lee;
A[7] whyl scho blew, anoþer scho sang.

Hir garthes[8] of nobyll sylk þay were,
The bukylls were of berel[9] stone;
Hir steraps were of crystal clere,
And all with perel[10] over bygone.[11]

Hir payetrel[12] was of irale[13] fyne;
Hir cropour was of orphare[14];
Hir brydill was of golde fyne —
One aythir syde hang[15] bellys three.

[1] The meaning of these two verbs is very doubtful
[2] shall she be described
[3] saw
[4] saddle
[5] ivory (see *NED.* s.v. *ruel-bone*)
[6] toadstone (cf. Shakespeare, *A.Y.L.* 2. 1. 13)
[7] one
[8] girths
[9] beryl
[10] pearl
[11] covered
[12] horse's breastplate
[13] (?)
[14] orphrey, rich embroidery (esp. of gold)
[15] hung

Scho led thre grewehundis[1] in a lesse,[2]
And seven raches[3] by hir ron;
Scho bare an horn abowt hir halse,[4]
And undir hir belt full many a flon.[5]

Thomas lay and saw þat syght,
Undirnethe ane semely tree.
He sayd: 'Ȝon[6] es Mary, most of myght,
Þat bare þat Child þat dyede for mee.

'Bot-if[7] I speke with ȝon lady bryght,
I hope[8] myn herte will bryst[9] in three;
Now sall I go with all my myght,
Hir for to mete at Eldoun tree.'

Thomas rathely[10] up he rase,
And ran over þat mountayn hye;
Gyff[11] it be als þe story says,
He hir mette at Eldon tree.

He knelyde down appon his knee,
Undirnethe þat grenwode spray:
'Lufly lady, rewe[12] on me,
Qwene of heven, als[13] þou wel may!'

Than spake þat lady milde of thoght:
'Thomas, late swylke wordes be!
Qwene of heven ne am I noght,
For I tuke[14] never so hegh degre;

Bote I am of anoþer countree,
If[15] I be payreld[16] most of pryse.[17]
I ryde aftyr this wylde fee[18];
My raches rynnys at my devyse.[19]'

1 greyhounds
2 leash
3 hunting-dogs (hounds that follow by the scent, as the greyhound does by sight; so Murray)
4 neck
5 arrow

6 yon
7 unless
8 believe
9 burst
10 quickly
11 if
12 have pity

13 a
14 t
15 e
16 a
17 p
18 g
19 c

'If þou be pareld most of pryse,
And rydis here in thy foly,
Of lufe, lady, als þou erte wyse,[1]
Þou gyffe me leve to lye the by!'

Scho sayde: 'Þou man, þat ware foly.
I praye þe, Thomas, late me bee;
For I saye þe full sekirly,[2]
Þat synn wolde fordoo[3] all my beaute.'

'Lufly lady, rewe on mee,
And I will evermore with the duelle;
Here my trouth I plyght to the,
Whethir þou will in heven or helle.'

'Man of molde, þou will me merre,[4]
Bot ȝit þou sall hafe all thy will;
Bot trowe þou wele, þou chevys[5] þe werre,[6]
For alle my beaute þou will spyll.'

Down þan lyghte þat lady bryght,
Undirnethe þat grenewode spray;
And, als þe story tellis full ryght,
Seven sythis[7] by hir he lay.

Scho sayd: 'Man, the lykes thy play;
What byrd[8] in boure[9] may dele[10] with the?
Thou merrys me all þis longe day;
I pray the, Thomas, late me bee!'

Thomas stod up in þat stede,[11]
And he byheld þat lady gay:
Hir hare it hang all over hir hede,
Hir eghne semede out, þat were so gray,

[1] wise (Murray says that *wise* and *pryse* are pronounced as if *wice* and *price*)
[2] surely
[3] destroy
[4] mar
[5] succeedest, thrives
[6] worse
[7] times
[8] woman
[9] bower
[10] deal
[11] stead, place

And all the rich cloþyng was away,
  Þat he byfore saw in þat stede;
Hir a[1] schanke[2] blake, hir oþer gray,
  And all hir body lyke þe lede.[3]

Þan said Thomas: 'Allas, allas!
  In fayth, þis es a dullfull[4] syght!
How art þou fadyd in þe face,
  Þat schan byfore als þe sonne so bryght!'

Sche sayd: 'Thomas, take leve at sonne and
  And als[5] at lefe þat grewes on tree;
This twelmonth sall þou with me gone,[6]
  And medill-erthe[7] sall þou not see.'

'Allas,' he sayd, 'and wa es mee!
  I trowe my dedis wyll wirk me care.
My saule, Jesu, byteche[8] I the,
  Whedirsomever my banes sall fare.'

Scho ledde hym in at Eldone Hill,
  Undirnethe a derne[9] lee,
Whare it was dirk als mydnyght myrk,[10]
  And ever þe water till his knee.

The montenans[11] of dayes three,
  He herd bot swoghyng[12] of þe flode;
At þe laste he sayd: 'Full wa[13] es mee!
  Almast I dye for fawte[14] of fode.'

1 one
2 leg
3 lead
4 doleful
5 also

6 go
7 middle earth
8 commit
9 secret
10 murk, murky

11 amount,
12 roaring
13 woe
14 lack

9. Sche sayd. These two words are perhaps extra-metrical, and n

Scho lede hym intill a faire herbere,[1]
Whare frute was growand gret plentee;
Pere and appill both rype þay were,
The date, and als the damasee[2];

Þe fygge, and also þe wyneberye[3];
The nyghtgales byggande[4] on þair nest,
Þe papejoyes[5] fast abowt gan[6] flye,
And throstylls sang — wolde hafe no rest.

He pressede to pull frute with his hand,
Als man[7] for fude[8] þat was nere faynt.
Scho sayd: 'Thomas, þou late þam stand,
Or ells þe fende the will atteynt.

If þou it plokk, sothely to say,
Thi saule gose to þe fyr of helle;
It commes never owte or[9] Domesday,
Bot þer in payne ay for to duelle.

Thomas, sothely I the hyght[10]:
Come lygg thyn hede down on my knee,
And þou sall se þe fayrest syght
Þat ever saw man of thi contree.'

He did in hye[11] als scho hym badde:
Appon hir knee his hede he layd,
For hir to paye[12] he was full glade;
And þan þat lady to him sayd:

'Seese þou now ȝon faire way,
Þat lygges over ȝon hegh mountayn?
Ȝone es þe waye to heven for ay,
When synfull sawles are passede þer payn.

[1] garden, orchard
[2] damson
[3] grape
[4] dwelling
[5] parrots
[6] did
[7] a man
[8] food
[9] ere
[10] bid
[11] haste
[12] please

Seese þou now ȝon oþer way,
  Þat lygges lawe[1] bynethe ȝon ryse[2]?
Ȝon es þe way, þe sothe to say,
  Unto þe joye of Paradyse.

Seese þou ȝitt ȝon thirde way,
  Þat ligges undir ȝon grene playn?
Ȝone es þe way, with tene[3] and tray[4]
  Whare synfull saulis suffirris þair payn.

Bot seese þou now ȝone ferthe way,
  Þat lygges over ȝon depe delle?
Ȝone es þe way — so waylaway! —
  Unto þe birnand fyr of helle.

Seese þou ȝitt ȝone faire castell,
  Þat standis over ȝon heghe hill?
Of towne and towre it beris þe bell[5];
  In erthe es none lyke þertill.

Forsothe, Thomas, ȝone es myn awen
  And þe kynges[6] of this countree;
Bot me ware lever[7] be hanged and drawen,
  Or[8] þat he wyste þou laye by me.

When þou commes to ȝone castell gay,
  I pray þe curtase man to bee;
And whatso any man to þe say,
  Luke þou answere none bot mee.

My lorde es servede at ylk[9] a messe[10]
  With thritty knyghtis faire and free;
I sall say, syttand at the desse,[11]
  I tuke thi speche byȝonde the see.'

[1] low
[2] spray
[3] grief
[4] affliction
[5] excels
[6] king's
[7] I had rather
[8] ere
[9] each

Thomas still als stane he stude,
And byheld þat lady gay;
Scho was agayn als[1] faire and gude,
And also[1] ryche on hir palfray;

Hir grewehundis fillide[2] with dere blode,
Hir raches couplede, by my fay[3];
Scho blew hir horn with mayn[4] and mode,[5]
And to þe castell scho tuke þe way.

Into þe hall sothely scho went;
Thomas foloued at hir hand.
Than ladyes come, both faire and gent,[6]
With curtasye to hir kneland.

Harpe and fethill[7] both þay fand,
Þe getern,[8] and also þe sawtrye,[9]
Lute and rybybe[10] bothe gangand,
And all manere of mynstralsye.

Þe moste mervelle þat Thomas thoghte
When þat he stode appon þe flore —
Fefty hertis in were broghte,
Þat were bothe grete and store.[11]

Raches lay lapand in þe blode;
Cokes come with dryssyng-knyfe[12];
Thay bryttened[13] þe dere als[14] þey were wode[15];
Revell amanges þam was full ryfe.

Knyghtis dawnsede by three and three;
There was revell, gamen, and playe;
Lufly ladyes faire and free
Satt and sang in riche araye.

[1] as
[2] (were) filled
[3] faith
[4] might
[5] spirit
[6] well bred
[7] fiddle
[8] gittern (a kind of guitar)
[9] psaltery (a kind of zither)
[10] rebeck (a three-stringed fiddle)
[11] mighty
[12] dressing-knife
[13] cut up
[14] as if
[15] mad

More[1] þan I ȝow saye, parde,[2]
Till on a day — so hafe I grace! —
My lufly lady sayd to mee:

'Buske[3] the, Thomas, þe buse[4] agayn,
For here þou may no lengar be;
Hye[5] the faste with myght and mayn;
I sall the bryng till Eldone tree.'

Thomas sayd þan with hevy chere:
'Lufly lady, now late me bee,
For certaynly I hafe bene here
Noght bot þe space of dayes three.'

'Forsothe, Thomas, als I þe tell,
Þou hase bene here thre ȝere and more,
And langer here þou may noght duell;
The skyll[6] I sall þe tell wharefore:

To-morne of helle þe foule fende
Amang this folk will feche his fee;
And þou art mekill[7] man and hende[8] —
I trow full wele he wil chese[9] the.

For all þe gold þat ever may bee
Fro hethyn[10] unto þe worldis ende,
Þou bese[11] never betrayed for mee;
Þerefore with me I rede[12] thou wende.'

Scho broght hym agayn to Eldone tree,
Undirnethe þat grenewode spray. —
In Huntlee bankes es mery to bee,
Whare fowles synges both nyght and day.

[1] longer
[2] in truth (Fr. *par Dieu*)
[3] prepare
[4] behooves (to return)
[5] haste
[6] reason
[7] large, robust
[8] courtly

AMIS AND AMILOUN

Amis and Amiloun (late thirteenth century) is ultimately derived from a Greek or Oriental source. The story represents the mediæval notion of an ideal friendship, capable of attaining supreme heights of devotion. Amiloun risks his life to save the honor of Amis by maintaining his friend's perjured word in a trial by combat, and afterwards suffers for his generosity by becoming a leper. As an outcast and beggar, with only one young page as companion, he is at length recognized by Amis, and lovingly cared for and comforted. When an angel declares to Amis in a dream that only by means of the blood of his two children can Amiloun be cured, he meets even this demand upon his friendship and gratitude. Then a miracle takes place. Each friend has done what the other's need called for, and their sins are now fully atoned for by self-sacrifice. The two slaughtered children are found alive, happily playing together, and the story ends in cheer.

There are versions in Old French, Latin, Old Norse, and Celtic. The English romance is closely related to an Anglo-Norman poem printed by Kölbing, who has elaborately edited the English text (*Altenglische Bibliothek*, Vol. 2, Heilbronn, 1884), closely following the Auchinleck manuscript. The language is Northeast Midland. For a good outline, see Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 250–2.

Our extract covers lines 2245–2424.

Þan þouȝt þe douk,[1] wiþouten lesing,[2]
For to slen[3] his childer so ȝing[4]
It were a dedli sinne;
And þan þouȝt he, bi heven[5] King,
His broþer out of sorwe bring,[6]
For þat nold he nouȝt blinne.[7]
So it bifel on Cristes niȝt,
Swiche time as Jesu, ful of miȝt,
Was born to save mankinne,[8]
To chirche to wende, al þat þer wes,[9]
Þai diȝten[10] hem, wiþouten les,[11]
Wiþ joie and worldes winne.[12]

[1] duke
[2] deception
[3] slay
[4] young
[5] heaven's
[6] to bring
[7] to that end would he not cease (his endeavors)
[8] MS. -kunne
[9] who were there
[10] prepared
[11] to tell the truth
[12] delight

Þan[1] þai were redi for to fare,[2]
Þe douke bad al þat þer ware,
To chirche þai schuld wende,
Litel and michel, lasse and mare,[3]
Þat non bileft[4] in chaumber are,[5]
As þai wald[6] ben his frende[7];
And seyd he wald himselve þat nizt
Kepe[8] his broþer, þat gentil knizt,
Þat was so god and kende.[9]
Þan was þer non þat durst say nay:
To chirche þai went in her[10] way,
At hom bileft þe[11] hende.[12]

Þe douke wel[13] fast gan aspie[14]
Þe kays of þe noricerie,[15]
Erþan[16] þai schuld gon;
And priveliche[17] he cast his eize,[18]
And aparceived ful witterlye[19]
Where þat þai hadde hem don.[20]
And when þai were to chirche went,[21]
Þan Sir Amis, verrament,[22]
Was bileft al on.[23]
He tok a candel fair and brizt,
And to þe kays he went ful rizt,
And tok hem oway ichon.[24]

Alon himself, wiþouten mo,[25]
Into þe chaumber he gan to go,
Þer þat his childer were,

1 when
2 go
3 greater
4 left
5 should be; MS. þare
6 would
7 friends
8 watch over
9 kind
10 their
11 MS. þo
12 they left the noble one
13 very
14 began to look for
15 nursery
16 before
17 secretly
18 eye

And biheld hem boþe to,[1]
Hou fair þai lay togider þo,
And slepe boþe yfere[2];
Þan seyd himselve: 'Bi Seyn Jon,
It were gret reweþe[3] ȝou to slon,
Þat God haþ bouȝt so dere!'
His kniif he had drawen þat tide[4];
For sorwe he sleynt[5] oway biside,
And wepe wiþ reweful[6] chere.[7]

Þan he hadde wopen[8] þer he stode,
Anon he turned oȝain his mode,[9]
And sayd wiþouten delay:
'Mi broþer was so kinde and gode,
Wiþ grimly[10] wounde he schad[11] his blod
For mi love opon a day;
Whi schuld Y þan mi childer spare,
To bring mi broþer out of care?
O, certes,[12]' he sayd, 'nay!
To help mi broþer now at þis nede,
God graunt me þer to wele[13] to spede,[14]
And Mari, þat best may[15]!'

No lenger stint[16] he no stode,[17]
Bot hent[18] his kniif wiþ dreri mode,
And tok his children þo;
For he nold nouȝt spille her[19] blode,
Over a bacine[20] fair and gode
Her[19] þrotes he schar[21] atuo.[22]

1 both two, both
2 together
3 pity
4 time
5 slunk
6 pitiful
7 countenance
8 wept
9 changed his mind again
10 fearful
11 shed
12 *truly*
13 well-being
14 advance
15 can (help)
16 forbore
17 nor stood still
18 seized
19 their
20 basin (OF. *bacin*)
21 shore, cut
22 in two, asunder

And when he hadde hem boþe slain,
He laid hem in her bed ogain,
—No wonder þei[1] him wer[2] wo!—
And hilde[3] hem, þat no wiȝt[4] schuld se;
As no man hadde at[5] hem be,[6]
Out of chaumber he gan go.

And when he was out of chaumber gon,
Þe dore he steked[7] stille anon
As fast as it was biforn;
Þe kays he hidde under a ston,
And þouȝt þai schuld wene[8] ichon
Þat þai hadde ben forlorn.[9]
To his broþer he went him þan,
And seyd to þat careful[10] man,
Swiche time as God was born:
'Ich have þe brouȝt mi childer[11] blod;
Ich hope it schal do þe gode,
As þe angel seyd biforn.'

'Broþer,' Sir Amiloun gan to say,
'Hastow[12] slayn þine children tuay[13]?
Allas, whi de[de]stow[14] so?'
He wepe and seyd: 'Waileway!
Ich had lever[15] til Domesday[16]
Have lived in care and wo!'
Þan seyd Sir Amis: 'Be now stille;
Jesu, when it is his wille,
May sende me childer mo.[17]
For me[18] of blis þou art al bare[19];
Ywis, mi liif wil Y nouȝt spare
To help þe now þerfro.[20]'

[1] though, if
[2] were
[3] concealed
[4] nobody
[5] with
[6] been
[7] fastened
[8] suppose
[9] lost
[10] full of care, sad
[11] children's
[12] hast thou
[13] two
[14] didst thou
[15] rather
[16] Doomsday
[17] more
[18] on my account
[19] deprived of
[20] out of thy con

He tok þat blode, þat was so brigt,
And alied[1] þat gentil knigt,
Þat er[2] was hende[3] in hale[4];
And seþþen[5] in a bed him digt,[6]
And wreige[7] him wel warm, aplígt,[8]
Wiþ cloþes riche and fale.[9]
'Broþer,' he seyd, 'ly now stille,
And falle on slepe þurch Godes wille,
As þe angel told in tale[10];
And Ich hope wele, wiþouten lesing,
Jesu, þat is heven King,
Schal bote[11] þe of þi bale.[12]'

Sir Amis lete[13] him ly[14] alon,
And into his chapel he went anon,
In gest[15] as ge may here;
And for his childer þat he hadde slon
To God of heven he made his mon,[16]
And preyd wiþ rewely[17] chere
[He] schuld save him fram schame þat day,
And Mari, his moder, þat best may,
Þat was him leve[18] and dere.
And Jesu Crist, in þat stede,[19]
Ful wele he herd þat knigtes bede,[20]
And graunt[21] him his praiere.

A morwe,[22] as tite[23] as it was day,
Þe levedi com hom, al wiþ play,[24]
Wiþ knigtes ten and five.

1 anointed
2 formerly
3 courteous
4 hall
5 afterwards
6 arranged
7 covered
8 in truth
9 many
10 his message
11 cure
12 suffering
13 left
14 to lie, lying
15 the story
16 moan
17 piteous
18 dear, precious
19 in that situation
20 prayer
21 granted
22 on the morrow
23 soon
24 in merry mood

… of her strive[5];
And seyd he hadde þe keys nome[6];
Schuld no man in þe chaumber come
Bot himself and his wive.[7]

Anon he tok his levedi þan,
And seyd to hir: 'Leve leman,
Be bliþe and glad of mode;
For, bi him þat þis warld wan,[8]
Boþe mi childer Ich have slan,[9]
Þat were so hende[10] and gode;
For me þouȝt in mi sweven[11]
Þat an angel com fram heven,
And seyd me, þurch her blode[12]
Mi broþer schuld passe out of his wo;
Þerfore Y slouȝ hem boþe to,
To hele þat frely fode.[13]'

Þan was þe levedi ferly wo,[14]
And seiȝe[15] hir lord was al so;
Sche comfort[16] him ful ȝare.[17]
'O lef[18] liif,' sche seyd þo,
'God may sende ous[19] childer mo,
Of hem have þou no care;
Ȝif it ware at min hert rote,[20]
For to bring þi broþer bote[21]
My lyf Y wold not spare.

1 where
2 woeful, indeed, were they in life
3 peace
4 cease
5 effort
6 taken
7 wife

8 won
9 slain
10 gentle
11 dream
12 by means of their blood
13 noble man
14 exceedingly sorrowful

15 saw
16 comforted
17 readily, soon
18 dear
19 us
20 my heart's root
21 remedy

For no man shal oure children see,
To-morow shal þey beryed be
  Riȝt as þey faire[1] ded ware.'

Al þus þe lady faire and bryȝt
Comfort hur lord with al hur myȝt,
  As ȝe mow[2] understonde;
And seth[3] þey went boþ ful ryȝt
To Sir Amylion, þat gentyl knyȝt,
  Þat ere[4] was free[5] to fonde.[6]
And whan Sir Amylion wakyd þoo,
Al his fowlehed[7] was agoo,[8]
  Þurch grace of Goddes sonde[9];
And þan was he as feire a man
As ever he was ȝet or þan,[10]
  Seþ he was born in londe.

Þan were þey al bliþ:
Her[11] joy couþ no man kyth,[12]
  And þonked God þat day.
And þan, as ȝe mow listen and lyth,[13]
To a chamber þey went swyþ,[14]
  Þere þe children lay;
And, without wemme[15] and wound,
Al hool[16] and sound þe children found,
  And layen togeder and play.
For joye þey wept þere þey stood,
And þonked God with myld mood;
  Her care was al away.

1 naturally
2 must
3 afterwards
4 formerly, before
5 noble
6 *to make trial of*; in trial
7 disease
8 gone
9 messenger
10 formerly *or* then
11 their
12 declare
13 hearken
14 quickly
15 blemish
16 whole

SIR ORFEO

Sir Orfeo (about 1320) is a classical fable metamorphosed into a fairy tale, told in the manner of a Breton lay. Orpheus, like the banished Duke in *As You Like It*, resorts to the fields and woods for a season, after Eurydice is borne away; but she is restored to him, he regains his kingdom, and they live long afterwards. Ker says of the lay (*English Literature: Medieval*, p. 127; see also *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* I. 328): 'One may refer to it as a standard, to show what can be done in the mediæval art of narrative, with the simplest elements and smallest amount of decoration. It is minstrel poetry, popular poetry — the point is clear when King Orfeo excuses himself to the King of Faerie by the rules of his profession as a minstrel; that was intended to produce a smile, and applause perhaps, among the audience. But though a minstrel's poem, it is far from rude, and it is quite free from the ordinary faults of rambling and prosing, such as Chaucer ridiculed in his *Geste of Sir Thopas*. It is all in good compass, and coherent; nothing in it is meaningless or ill-placed.'

A ballad on the theme is No. 19 of Child's collection.

Our text follows Zielke's print (Breslau, 1880) of the Auchinleck manuscript (with lines 1–24, 33–46 supplied from Harl. MS. 3810), but the punctuation has been freely altered. Occasional variations from Zielke's readings are noted.

We redyn[1] ofte and fynde ywryte,[2]
As clerkes don us to wyte,[3]
Þe layes þat ben of harpyng
Ben yfounde[4] of frely [ferly ?] þing.[5]
Sum ben of wele, and sum of wo,
And sum of joy and merþe also,
Sum of trechery, and sum of gyle,
And sum of happes[6] þat fallen by whyle[7];
Sum of bourdys,[8] and sum of rybaudry,
And sum þer ben of þe feyrye.[9]
Off alle þing þat men may se,
Moost o love[10] forsoþe þey be.
In Brytain þis[11] layes arne[12] ywryte,
Furst yfounde and forþe ygete,[13]

[1] read
[2] written
[3] make us to know
[4] composed
[5] of noble matters
[6] events
[7] happen at times
[8] mirth, jests
[9] magic, enchantment
[10] MS. lowe
[11] th
[12] ar
[13] co

Of aventures þat fillen[1] by dayes,[2]
Wherof Brytouns made her layes.
When þey myght owher[3] heryn
Of aventures þat þer weryn,
Þey toke her harpys wiþ game,[4]
Maden layes, and ȝaf it[5] name.
  Of aventures þat han befalle
Y can sum telle, but nought alle.[6]
Herken, lordyngs þat ben trewe,
And Y wol ȝou telle of sir Orphewe.
  Orfeo was a king,
In his time an heiȝe lording,
A stalworþ man and hardi bo,[7]
Large,[8] curteys he was also.
His fader was comen of King Pluto,
And his moder of King Juno,
Þat sum time were as godes yhold,
For aventours þat þai dede and told.
  Orpheo most of ony þing
Lovede þe gle of harpyng;
Syker[9] was every gode harpour[10]
Of hym to have moche honour.
Hymself loved for to harpe,
And layde þereon his wittes scharpe.[11]
He lernyd so, þer noþing was
A better harper in no plas.
In þe world was never man born
Þat ever Orpheo sat biforn,
And[12] he myȝt of his harpyng her,
He schulde þinke þat he wer
In one of þe joys of Paradys,
Suche joy and melody in his harpyng is.

1 fell
2 once on a time
3 anywhere
4 joy, delight
5 them
6 MS. all
7 both
8 generous
9 sure
10 MS. harpoure
11 and gave his keen mind to the matter
12 if

Þis king sojurnd in Traciens,[1]
Þat was a cite of noble defens;
He hadde wiþ him a quen of priis,[2]
Þat was ycleped Dame Heurodis—
Þe fairest levedi, for þe nones,[3]
Þat mizt gon on bodi and bones,
Ful of love and of godenisse,
Ac[4] no man may telle hir fairnise.
Bifel so in þe comessing[5] of May,
When miri and hot is þe day,
Oway beþ winter-schours,
And everi feld is ful of flours,
And blosme breme[6] on everi bouz
Overal[7] wexeþ[8] miri anouz,[9]
Þis ich[10] quen, Dame Heurodis,
Tok to[11] maidens of priis,
And went in an undrentide[12]
To play bi an orchard-side,
To se þe floures sprede and spring,
And to here þe foules[13] sing.
Þai sett hem doun al þre
Under a fair ympe-tre,[14]
And wel sone þis fair quene
Fel on slepe[15] opon þe grene.
Þe maidens durst hir nouzt awake,
Bot lete hir ligge[16] and rest take;
So sche slepe til afternone,
Þat under[n]tide was al ydone.
Ac so sone as sche gan awake,
Sche crid and loþli bere[17] gan make:
Sche froted[18] hir honden and hir fet,

1 Thrace (*lit.* Thracians)
2 renown
3 at that time
4 but
5 beginning
6 bright
7 everywhere
8 grow
9 enough
10 same
11 two
12 morning
13 birds
14 grafted tree
15 asleep
16 lie
17 unpleasing behavior
18 rubbed, wrung

And crached[1] hir visage, it bled wete;
Hir riche robe sche[2] al torett,[3]
And was ravysed[4] out of hir witt.
Þe two[5] maidens hir biside
No durst wiþ hir no leng[6] abide,
Bot ourn[7] to þe palays ful riȝt,
And told boþe squier and kniȝt
Þat her quen awede[8] wold,
And bad hem go and hir athold.[9]
Kniȝtes urn,[7] and levedis also,
Damisels sexti and mo;
In þe orchard to þe quen hye[10] come,
And her up in her[11] armes nome,[12]
And brouȝt hir to bed atte[13] last,
And held hir þere fine[14] fast.
Ac ever sche held[15] in o[16] cri,
And wold up and owy.[17]
When Orfeo herd þat tiding,
Never him nas[18] wers for[19] noþing;
He come up wiþ kniȝtes tene[20]
To chaumber riȝt bifor þe quene,
And biheld, and seyd wiþ grete pite:
'O lef liif, what is te,[21]
Þat ever ȝete hast ben so stille,
And now gredest[22] wonder schille[23]?
Þi bodi, þat was so white ycore,[24]
Wiþ þine nailes is al totore.[25]
Alas! þi rode,[26] þat was so red,
Is as wan as þou were ded,

1 scratched
2 MS. hye
3 rent apart
4 ravished; MS. reneyd
5 MS. too
6 longer
7 ran
8 go mad
9 restrain
10 they
11 their
12 took
13 at the
14 very
15 continued
16 one
17 away
18 it was not
19 because of
20 ten
21 what is ill with thee
22 dost cry
23 wondrous shrill(y)
24 choicely
25 rent
26 complexion

And also þine fingres smale
Beþ al blodi and al pale!
Allas, þi lovesum eyȝen to[1]
Lokeþ so[2] man doþ on his fo!
A, dame, Ich biseche merci!
Lete ben[3] al þis reweful cri,
And tel me what þe is[4] and hou,
And what þing may þe help now.'
Þo lay sche stille atte last,
And gan to wepe swiþe fast,
And seyd þus þe king to:
'Allas, mi lord, sir Orfeo!
Seþþen we first togider were,
Ones[5] wroþ[6] never we nere[7];
Bot ever Ich have yloved þe
As mi liif, and so þou me.
Ac now we mot delen ato[8];
Do þi best, for y mot[9] go.'
'Allas,' quaþ he, 'forlorn Ich am!
Whider wiltow go, and to wham?
Whider þou gost, Ichil[10] wiþ þe,
And whider Y go, þou schalt wiþ me
'Nay, nay, sir, þat nouȝt nis[11];
Ichil þe telle al hou it is:
As Ich lay þis undertide,
And slepe under our orchard-side,
Þer come to me to[1] fair kniȝtes,
Wele y-armed[12] al to riȝtes,
And bad me comen on[13] heiȝing,[14]
And speke wiþ her[15] lord þe king.
And Ich answerd at[16] wordes bold,

[1] two
[2] as
[3] put aside, cease
[4] what ails thee
[5] once
[6] angry
[7] were not
[8] separate (part in two)
[9] must
[10] I will
[11] that is in no way possible
[12] armed

Y durst nouȝt, no Y nold.[1]
Þai priked[2] oȝain, as þai miȝt drive[3];
Þo kom her king also blive,[4]
Wiþ an hundred kniȝtes and mo,
And damisels an hundred also,
Al on snowe-white stedes;
As white as milke were her wedes.[5]
Y no seiȝe never ȝete bifore
So fair creatours ycore.[6]
Þe king hadde a croun on hed;
It nas of silver, no of gold red,
Ac[7] it was of a precious ston;
As briȝt as þe sonne it schon.
And as son as he to me cam,
Wold Ich, nold Ich,[8] he me nam,[9]
And made me wiþ him ride
Opon a palfray bi his side,
And brouȝt me to his palays,
Wele atird[10] in ich ways,[11]
And schewed me castels and tours,
Rivers, forestes, friþ[12] wiþ flours,
And his riche stedes[13] ichon;
And seþþen me brouȝt oȝain hom
Into our owhen[14] orchard;
And said to me þus afterward:
" Loke, dame, to-morwe þatow[15] be
Riȝt here under þis ympe-tre,
And þan þou schalt wiþ ous[16] go,
And live wiþ ous evermo;
And ȝif þou makest ous ylet,[17]
Whar[18] þou be, þou worst yfet,[19]

nor would I
rode hard
hasten
very quickly
their garments
chosen out
but

8 whether I was willing or not (would I, would I not)
9 took
10 adorned
11 in all ways
12 glade
13 places

14 own
15 that thou
16 us
17 delay
18 wherever
19 shalt be fetched

And þei[1] þou best[2] so totorn,
Ȝete þou worst[3] wiþ ous yborn.[4]"'
When king Orfeo herd þis cas,[5]
'Owe[6]!' quaþ he, 'allas, allas!
Lever me were to lete[7] mi liif,
Þan þus to lese[8] þe quen mi wiif!'
He asked conseyl at[9] ich man,
Ac no man him help no can.
Amorwe[10] þe undertide is come,
And Orfeo haþ his armes ynome,[11]
And wele ten hundred kniȝtes wiþ him,
Ich y-armed stout and grim;
And wiþ þe quen wenten he[12]
Riȝt unto þat ympe-tre.
Þai made scheltrom[13] in icha side,[14]
And sayd þai wold þere abide,
And dye þer everichon,
Er þe quen schuld from hem gon.
Ac ȝete amiddes hem ful riȝt[15]
Þe quen was oway ytwiȝt,[16]
Wiþ fairi[17] forþ ynome;
Men wist never wher sche was bicome.[18]
Þo was þer criing, wepe, and wo;
Þe king into his chaumber is go,[19]
And oft swoned opon þe ston,
And made swiche diol[20] and swiche mon
Þat neiȝe his liif was yspent—
Þer was no amendement.
He cleped togider his barouns,

1 though
2 be
3 shalt be
4 carried away
5 situation
6 O woe
7 give up
8 lose
9 from
10 on the morrow
11 taken
12 they
13 band, troop
14 each side
15 from amidst them
16 snatched; MS. ytvig
17 by witchcraft, magic
18 what was become of
19 gone
20 dole

Erls, lordes of renouns[1];
And when þai al ycomen were,
'Lordinges,' he said, 'bifore ȝou here
Ich ordainy min heiȝe-steward
To wite[2] mi kingdom afterward;
In mi stede ben he schal,
To kepe mi londes over al.
For, now Ichave mi quen ylore,[3]
Þe fairest levedi þat ever was bore,
Never eft Y nil[4] no woman se;
Into wildernes Ichil te,[5]
And live þer evermore
Wiþ wilde bestes in holtes[6] hore.[7]
And when ȝe understond þat Y be spent,[8]
Make ȝou þan a parlement,
And chese ȝou a newe king;
Now doþ ȝour best wiþ al mi þing.[9]'
   Þo was þer wepeing in þe halle,
And grete cri among hem alle;
Unneþe[10] miȝt old or ȝong
For wepeing speke a word wiþ tong.
Þai kneled adoun al yfere,
And praid him, ȝif his wille were,
Þat he no schuld fram hem go;
'Do way,' quaþ he, 'it schal be so.'
Al his kingdom he forsoke,
Bot a sclavin[11] on him he[12] toke—
He ne hadde kirtel no hode,
Schert, [ne] non oþer gode.
Bot his harp he tok, algate,[13]
And dede him barfot out atte ȝate;
No man most[14] wiþ him go.

1 renown
2 rule
3 lost
4 will not
5 journey
6 forests
7 gray (from lichens or bareness)
8 dead
9 property
10 scarcely, with difficulty
11 pilgrim's mantle
12 MS. te
13 notwithstanding
14 was allowed

Oway! what þer was wepe and wo,
When he þat hadde ben king wiþ croun,
Went so poverlich out of toun!
Þurch wode and over heþ
Into þe wildernes he geþ;
Noþing he fint þat him is ays,[1]
Bot ever he liveþ in gret malais.[2]
He þat hadde ywed[3] þe fowe[4] and griis,[5]
And on bed þe purper biis,[6]
Now on hard heþe he liþ,
Wiþ leves and gresse he him wriþ.[7]
He þat hadde had castels and tours,
River, forest, friþ wiþ flours,
Now, þei[8] it comenci to snewe[9] and frese,
Þis king mote make his bed in mese[10];
He þat had yhad kniȝtes of priis
Bifor him kneland, and levedis,
Now seþ he noþing þat him likeþ,[11]
Bot wilde wormes bi him strikeþ[12];
He þat had yhad plente
Of mete and drink, of ich deynte,
Now may he al day digge and wrote,[13]
Er he finde his fille of rote.[14]
In somer he liveþ bi[15] wild frut
And berren[16] bot gode lut[17];
In winter may he noþing finde
Bot rote, grases, and þe rinde.[18]
Al his bodi was oway dwine[19]
For missays,[20] and al tochine.[21]
Lord! who may telle þe sore[22]

1 ease
2 distress, discomfort
3 worn
4 variegated fur
5 gray fur
6 fine linen (Lat. *byssus*)
7 covers
8 though
9 snow
10 moss
11 pleaseth
12 slip, crawl
13 grub
14 roots
15 on
16 berries
17 very few (good little); MS. lite
18 bark
19 shrunk; MS. dvine
20 discomfort
21 chapped
22 pain

Þis king sufferd ten ȝere and more?
His here of his berd, blac and rowe,[1]
To his girdelstede was growe;
His harp, whereon was al his gle,
He hidde in an holwe tre;
And, when þe weder was clere and briȝt,
He toke his harp to him wel riȝt,
And harped at his owhen wille;
Into alle þe wode þe soun gan schille,[2]
Þat alle þe wilde bestes þat þer beþ
For joie abouten him þai teþ,[3]
And alle þe foules þat þer were
Come and sete on ich a brere,[4]
To here his harping afin,[5]
So miche melody was þerin;
And when he his harping lete[6] wold,
No best bi him abide nold.
  He miȝt se him bisides
Oft in hot undertides
Þe king o fairi,[7] wiþ his rout,
Com to hunt him al about,
Wiþ dun,[8] [with] cri and bloweing,[9]
And houndes also wiþ him berking;
Ac no best þai no nome,[10]
No never he nist[11] whider þai bicome.
And oþer while he miȝt him se
As a gret ost bi him te[12] —
Wele atourned[13] ten hundred kniȝtes,
Ich y-armed to his riȝtes,[14]
Of contenaunce stout and fers,
Wiþ mani desplaid baners,

[1] rough
[2] did shrill
[3] draw
[4] briar
[5] perfectly; MS. afine
[6] stop
[7] fairyland
[8] din
[9] blowing of horns
[10] did they take
[11] knew not
[12] come
[13] appointed, fitted out
[14] properly

And ich his swerd ydrawe hold,[1]
Ac never he nist whider þai wold.
And oþer while he seiȝe oþer þing:
Kniȝtes and levedis com daunceing,
In queynt atire, gisely,[2]
[With] queynt[e][3] pas and soft[e]ly;
Tabours and trumpes[4] ȝede hem bi,
And al maner menstraci.
And on a day he seiȝe him biside
Sexti levedis on hors ride,
Gentil and jolif[5] as brid on ris[6]—
Nouȝt o man amonges hem þer nis;
And ich a faucoun on hond bere,[7]
And riden on haukin[g] bi o rivere.
Of game þai founde wel gode haunt[8]—
Maulardes,[9] hayroun,[10] and cormeraunt.
Þe foules of þe water ariseþ,
Þe faucouns hem wele deviseþ[11]:
Ich faucoun his pray slouȝ.
Þat seiȝe Orfeo, and louȝ.[12]
'Parfay,[13]' quaþ he, 'þer is fair game,
Þider Ichil, bi Godes name!
Ich was ywon[14] swiche werk to se';
He aros, and þider gan te.
To a levedi he was ycome,
Biheld, and haþ wele undernome,[15]
And seþ bi al þing þat it is
His owhen quen, Dam Heurodis.
Ȝern[16] he biheld hir, and sche him eke,
Ac noiþer to oþer a word no speke.
For messais þat sche on him seiȝe,

1 held
2 handsomely
3 dainty
4 drums and trumpets; MS. trimpes
5 merry
6 spray, twig
7 inf. after *seiȝe*, line 9
8 resort
9 mallards (wild ducks)
10 heron
11 make their plans well
12 laughed
13 by (my) faith
14 wont, accustomed
15 perceived
16 eagerly, gladly

Þat had ben so riche and so heiȝe,[1]
Þe teres fel out of her eiȝe.
Þe oþer levedis þis yseiȝe,
And maked hir oway to ride —
Sche most wiþ him no lenger abide.
'Allas,' quaþ he, 'now me is wo!
Whi nil[2] deþ now me slo?
Allas, wreche,[3] þat Y no miȝt
Dye now after þis siȝt!
Allas! to[4] long last mi liif,
When Y no dar nouȝt wiþ mi wiif,
No hye[5] to me, o word speke.
Allas! whi nil min hert breke?
Parfay,' quaþ he, 'tide wat bitide,[6]
Whider so þis[7] levedis ride,
Þe selve[8] way Ichil streche[9];
Of liif no deþ me no reche.[10]'
His sclavain he dede[11] on, als he[12] spac,[13]
And henge his harp opon his bac,
And had wel gode wil to gon —
He no spard noiþer stub no ston.
In at a roche þe leuedis rideþ,
And he after, and nouȝt abideþ.
When he was in þe roche ygo
Wele þre mile oþer[14] mo,
He com into a fair cuntray,
As briȝt so[15] sonne on somers day,
Smoþe and plain and al grene —
Hille no dale was þer non ysene.
Amidde þe lond a castel he s[e]iȝe,
Riche and real[16] and wonder heiȝe.

1 high, lofty
2 will not
3 miserable that I am
4 too
5 nor she
6 happen what may happen
7 these
8 same
9 go
10 I care not
11 put
12 MS. al so
13 spoke
14 or
15 as
16 royal

Al þe utmast wal
Was clere and schine[1] as cristal;
An hundred tours þer were about,
Degiselich[2] and bataild stout;
Þe butras com out of þe diche,[3]
Of rede gold y-arched[4] riche;
Þe bonsour[5] was anourned[6] al
Of ich maner divers animal;
Wiþin þer wer wide wones,[7]
Al of precious stones;
Þe werst piler on to biholde[8]
Was al of burnist gold.
Al þat lond was ever ligt:
For when it schuld be þerk[9] and nigt,
Þe riche stones ligt gonne,[10]
As brigt as doþ at none þe sonne.
No man may telle, no þenche in þougt,
Þe riche werk þat þer was wrougt;
Bi al þing him þink[11] þat it is
Þe proude court of Paradis.
  In þis castel þe levedis aligt;
He wold in after, gif he migt:
Orfeo knokkeþ atte gate;
Þe porter was redi þerate,
And asked what he wold have ydo.
'Parfay,' quaþ he, 'Ich am a minstrel, lo!
To solas þi lord wiþ mi gle,
Ʒif his suete wille be.'
Þe porter undede þe gate anon,
And lete him into þe castel gon.
  Þan he gan bihold about al,
And seige ful[12] liggeand[13] wiþin þe wal

[1] bright, beautiful
[2] elaborately ornamented
[3] moat
[4] arched
[5] arch
[6] adorned; MS. avowed
[7] apartments
[8] to look on; in appearance
[9] dark
[10] began to shine
[11] it would see
[12] full many
[13] lying

Of folk þat were þider ybrouȝt,
And þouȝt dede, and nere nouȝt.
Sum stode wiþouten hade,[1]
And sum non armes nade,[2]
And sum þurch þe bodi hadde wounde,
And sum lay wode,[3] ybounde,
And sum, armed, on hors sete,
And sum astrangled as þai ete,
And sum were in water adreynt,[4]
And sum wiþ fire al forschreynt[5];
Wives þer lay on childbedde,
Sum ded, and sum awedde[6];
And wonder fele þer lay bisides,
Riȝt as þai slepe her[7] undertides;
Eche was þus in þis warld ynome,
Wiþ fairi[8] þider ycome.
Þer he seiȝe his owhen wiif,
Dame Heurodis, his lef[9] liif,
Slepe under an ympe-tre:
Bi her cloþes he knewe þat it was he.[10]
And when he hadde bihold þis[11] mervails alle,
He went into þe kinges halle;
Þan seiȝe he þer a semly[12] siȝt—
A tabernacle blisseful and briȝt,
Þerin her[7] maister king sete,
And her quen fair and swete.
Her[7] crounes, her[7] cloþes schine so briȝt,
Þat unneþe[13] bihold he hem miȝt.
When he hadde biholden al þat þing,
He kneled adoun bifor þe king.

1 head
2 had not
3 mad
4 drowned
5 parched
6 out of their minds
7 their
8 enchantment
9 dear; MS. liif (see 91 23)
10 she
11 these
12 comely
13 with difficulty

3 ff. Cf. the enumeration in Chaucer, *Knight's Tale* 1137 ff.

'O lord,' he seyd, 'ȝif it þi wille were,
Mi menstraci þou schust[1] yhere.'
Þe king answerd: 'What man artow,
Þat art hider ycomen now?
Ich, no non þat is wiþ me,
No sent never after þe;
Seþþen þat Ich here regni gan,
Y no fond so folehardi man
Þat hider to ous durst wende,
Bot þat Ichim wold ofsende.[2]'
'Lord,' quaþ he, 'trowe[3] ful wel,
Y nam bot[4] a pover menstrel;
And, sir, it is þe maner of ous
To seche[5] mani a lordes hous;
Þei we nouȝt welcom no be,
Ȝete we mot[6] proferi forþ our gle.[7]'
   Bifore þe king he sat adoun,
And tok his harp so miri of soun,
And tempreþ[8] his harp, as he wele can,
And blisseful notes he þer gan,
Þat al þat in þe palays were
Com to him for to here,
And liggeþ[9] adoun to[10] his fete—
Hem þenkeþ[11] his melody so swete.
Þe king herkneþ and sitt ful stille,
To here his gle he haþ gode wille;
Gode bourde[12] he hadde of his gle,
Þe riche quen also hadde he.[13]
   When he hadde stint[14] his harping,
Þan seyd to him þe king:
'Menstrel, me likeþ wele þi gle;
Now aske of me what it be,

[1] shalt
[2] send for
[3] believe
[4] am only
[5] seek
[6] must needs
[7] song, music
[8] tunes
[9] lie
[10] at
[11] to them seems
[12] amusement, enjoyment
[13] she
[14] ceased

Largelich[1] Ichil[2] þe pay.
Now speke, and tow miȝt asay.[3]'
'Sir,' he seyd, 'Ich biseche þe
Þatow woldest ȝive me
Þat ich[4] levedi, briȝt on ble,[5]
Þat slepeþ under þe ympe-tre.'
'Nay,' quaþ þe king, 'þat nouȝt nere[6]!
A sori couple of ȝou it were,
For þou art lene, rowe,[7] and blac,
And sche is lovesum, witþouten lac[8];
A loþlich[9] þing it were, forþi,[10]
To sen hir in þi compayni.'
'O sir,' he seyd, 'gentil king,
Ȝete were it a wele fouler þing
To here a lesing[11] of[12] þi mouþe;
So, sir, as ȝe seyd *nouþe*,[13]
What I wold aski, have Y schold;
And nedes þou most þi word hold.[14]'
Þe king seyd: 'Seþþen it is so,
Take hir bi þe hond, and go;
Of hir Ichil þatow[15] be bliþe.'
He knelyd adoun, and þonked him swiþe;
His wiif he tok bi þe hond,
And dede[16] him swiþe out of þat lond,
And went him out of þat þede[17];
Riȝt as he come, þe way he ȝede.
So long he haþ þe way ynome,
To Traciens he is ycome,
Þat was his owhen cite;
Ac no man knewe þat it was he.
No forþer þan þe tounes ende

[1] generously
[2] I will
[3] if thou canst make trial
[4] same
[5] of hue
[6] were not possible
[7] rough
[8] lack, fault
[9] loathsome, dreadful
[10] therefore
[11] lie
[12] from
[13] now
[14] keep
[15] that thou
[16] went
[17] people

For knoweleche[1] [he] ne durst wende:
Bot wiþ a begger ybilt[2] ful narwe.
Þer he tok his herbarwe[3]
To[4] him and to his owhen wiif
As a minstrel of pover liif,
And asked tidings of þat lond,
And who þe kingdom held in hond.
Þe pover begger in his cote[5]
Told him everich a grot[6] —
How her quen was stole owy,
Ten ȝer gon,[7] wiþ[8] fairy;
And hou her[9] king in exile ȝede,
Bot no[10] man nist in wiche þede;
And hou þe steward þe lond gan hold;
And oþer mani þinges him told.
Amorwe oȝain none tide,[11]
He maked his wiif þer abide;
Þe beggers cloþes he borwed[12] anon,
And heng his harp his rigge[13] opon,
And went him into þat cite,
Þat men miȝt him bihold and se.
Erls and barouns bold,
Buriays[14] and levedis him gan bihold.
'Lo,' þai seyd, 'swiche a man!
How long þe here hongeþ him opan!
Lo, hou his berd hongeþ to his kne!
He is yclongen[15] also a tre!'
And as he ȝede in þe strete,
Wiþ his steward he gan mete,
And loude he sett on him a crie:
'Sir steward,' he seyd, 'merci!
Ich am an harpour of heþenisse[16];

1 for fear of being recognized
2 lodged
3 shelter
4 for
5 cot
6 every little bit, every detail
7 ago
8 by
9 their
10 MS. so
11 towards noon
12 borrowed; MS. borved
13 back
14 burgesse
15 shrunk,
16 from hea

Help me now in þis destresse!'
Þe steward seyd: 'Com wiþ me home[1];
Of þat Ichave, þou schalt have some.
Everich gode harpour is welcom me to,
For mi lordes love, Sir Orfeo.'
In þe castel þe steward sat atte mete,
And many lording was bi him sete;
Þer were trompour[s] and tabourers,
Harpours fele, and crouders.[2]
Miche melody þei maked alle;
And Orfeo sat stille in þe halle,
And herkneþ. When þei ben al stille,
He toke his harp and tempred schille[3];
Þe blissefulest notes he harped þere
Þat ever ani man yherd wiþ ere;
Ich man liked wele his gle.
Þe steward biheld and gan yse,
And knewe þe harp also[4] blive.[5]
'Menstrel,' he seyd, 'so mot þou þrive,[6]
Where hadestow þis harp, and hou?
Y pray þat þou me telle now.'
'Lord,' quaþ he, 'in uncouþe[7] þede,
Þurch a wildernes as Y ȝede,
Þer Y founde, in a dale,
Wiþ[8] lyouns a man totorn smale,
And wolves him frete[9] wiþ teþ so scharp.
Bi him Y fond þis ich[a][10] harp;
Wele ten ȝere it is ygo.'
'O,' quaþ þe steward, 'now me is wo!
Þat was mi lord, Sir Orfeo.
Allas, wreche, what schal Y do,
Þat have swiche a lord ylore?
Away,[11] þat Ich was ybore!

1 MS. come
2 players on the crowd, an early Celtic form of the violin
3 shrilly
4 MS. als
5 instantly
6 mayst thou prosper
7 strange
8 by
9 devoured
10 same
11 woe

Þat him was so hard grace[1] yȝarked,[2]
And so vile deþ ymarked[3]!'
Adoun he fel aswon to grounde.
His barouns him toke up in þat stoun
And telleþ him hou it geþ —
It is no bot[5] of manes deþ.
  King Orfeo knewe wele biþan
His steward was a trewe man;
And loved him, as he auȝt to do,
And stont up and seyð[6] þus: 'Lo,
Steward, herkne now þis þing:
Ȝif Ich were Orfeo þe king,
And hadde ysuffred ful ȝore[7]
In wildernisse miche sore;
And hadde ywon mi quen owy
Out of þe lond of fairy;
And hadde ybrouȝt þe levedi hende[8]
Riȝt here to þe tounes ende,
And wiþ a begger her in ynome;
And were miself hider ycome
Poverlich to þe, þus stille,
For to asay þi gode wille;
And ich founde þe þus trewe,
Þou no schust it never rewe[9]:
Sikerlich,[10] for love or ay,[11]
Þou schust be king after mi day.
Ȝif[12] þou of mi deþ hadest ben bliþe,
Þou schust ben voided[13] also swiþe.[14]'
  Þo al þo[15] þat þerein sete
Þat it was King Orfeo underȝete,[16]
And þe steward him wele knewe.

1 such misfortune
2 appointed
3 decreed
4 time
5 help
6 MS. seyt
7 for a long time past
8 gentle, gracious
9 repent
10 truly
11 or fear
12 MS. and ȝif
13 shouldst have been pu
14 in all haste
15 then all those
16 understood, perceived

Over and over þe bord[1] he þrewe,
And fel adoun to his fet;
So dede everich lord þat þer sete;
And al þai seyd at o criing:
'Ȝe beþ our lord, sir, and our king!'
Glad þai were of his live.[2]
To chaumber þai ladde him also[3] blive,[4]
And baþed him, and schaved his berd,
And tired[5] him as a king apert[6];
And seþþen[7] wiþ gret processioun
Þai brouȝt þe quen into þat toun,
Wiþ al maner menstraci.
Lord, þer was grete melody!
For joie þai wepe wiþ her eiȝe,
Þat hem so sounde[8] ycomen seiȝe.
Now king Orfeo newe coround is,
And his quen Dame Heurodis,
And lived long afterward;
And seþþen was king þe steward.
Harpours in Bretaine afterþan
Herd hou þis mervaile bigan,
And made[9] a lay of gode likeing,
And nempned it after þe king;
Þat lay 'Orfeo' is yhote[10] —
Gode is þe lay, swete is þe note.
Þus com Sir Orfeo out of his care;
God graunt ous alle wele to fare.

1 table
2 life
3 MS. als
4 as quickly as possible
5 attired
6 evident in his looks
7 afterwards
8 well in body
9 MS. made hereof
10 called

CHAUCER, SIR THOPAS

Sir Thopas is well characterized by Ker (*English Literature: Medieval*, pp. 129–31): 'Chaucer's burlesque is easily misunderstood. It is criticism, and it is ridicule; it shows up the true character of the common minstrelsy—the rambling narrative, the conventional stopgaps, the complacent childish vanity of the popular artist who has his audience in front of him, and knows all the easy tricks by which he can hold their attention. . . . Chaucer has made a good thing out of the rhyme doggerel, and expresses the pleasant old-fashioned quality of the minstrels' romances, as well as their absurdities. His parody touches on the want of plan and method and meaning in the popular rhymes of chivalry; it is also intended as criticism of their verse. That verse . . . is technically called *rime couée* or "tail-rhyme." . . . It very readily becomes monotonous and flat. . . . But it is a form of stanza which may be so used as to escape the besetting faults; the fact that it has survived through all the changes of literary fashion, and has been used by poets in all the different centuries, is something to the credit of the minstrels, as against the rude common-sense criticism of the Host of the Tabard when he stopped the Rime of *Sir Thopas*.' Skeat also is tempted to break a lance in behalf of the poem (Chaucer, *Works* 3.424): 'I cannot quite resist the suspicion that Chaucer may himself, in his youth, have tried his hand at such romance-writing in all seriousness, but lived to have a good-humored laugh even in some degree at his own expense; and he seems as if endeavoring to make his readers feel that they could wish there was somewhat more of it.'

For the parodies in detail, see Bennewitz' dissertation (Halle, 1879); Kölbing's article in *Englische Studien*, Vol. 11; and Skeat's notes. Our text in general follows Skeat.

For Chaucer in general, see Root, *The Poetry of Chaucer* (Boston, 1922), Legouis, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (London, 1913), or Jusserand, *Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1.267–343. To the investigator, Miss Hammond's *Chaucer: a Bibliographical Manual* (New York, 1908) is indispensable.

I

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,[1]
And I wol telle verrayment[2]
Of mirthe and of solas[3];
Al of a knyght was fair and gent[4]
In bataille and in tourneyment—
His name was Sir Thopas.

[1] with good will
[2] verily
[3] diversion
[4] refined, noble

Yborn he was in fer contree,
In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,
At Popering,[1] in the place[2];
His fader was a man ful free,[3]
And lord he was of that contree,
As it was Goddes grace.

Sir Thopas wex[4] a doghty[5] swayn;
Whyt was his face as payndemayn,[6]
His lippes rede as rose;
His rode[7] was[8] lyk scarlet in grayn,[9]
And I yow telle in good certayn,
He *hadde a semely nose.*

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun,[10]
That to his girdel raughte[11] adoun,
His shoon[12] of Cordewane[13];
Of Brugges[14] were his hosen[15] broun;
His robe was of ciclatoun[16]
That coste many a jane.[17]

He coude hunte at wilde deer,
And ryde an hauking for riveer,[18]
With grey goshauk on honde;
Therto he was a *good* archeer;
Of wrastling was *ther noon* his peer,
Ther[19] any ram[20] *shal stonde.*

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,[21]
They moorne for him, paramour,[22]
Whan hem were bet[23] to slepe;

small town in the district of Calais, southwest of Ostend
anor-house, chief house of a town or village
ble
ew to be
liant
ry fine white bread
mplexion (OE. *rudu*)
S is

9 dyed with cochineal; of a fast color
10 yellow
11 reached
12 shoes
13 Cordovan leather
14 Bruges, in Belgium
15 tight-fitting trousers, covering the feet
16 costly material, often embroidered with gold

17 small coin of Genoa, referred to in England as *halfpence*
18 towards the river
19 where
20 A ram was the usual prize at a wrestling-match
21 bower
22 longingly
23 it were better for them

But he was chast and no lechour,[1]
And sweet as is the bremble-flour[2]
That bereth the rede hepe.[3]

And so bifel upon a day,
Forsothe, as I yow telle may,
Sir Thopas wolde out ryde;
He worth upon[4] his stede gray,
And in his honde a launcegay,[5]
A long swerd by his syde.

He priketh[6] thurgh a fair forest,
Therinne is many a wilde best,
Ye, bothe bukke and hare;
And, as he priketh north and est,
I telle it yow, him[7] hadde almest
Bitid[8] a sory care.[9]

Ther springen herbes grete and smale,
The lycorys[10] and cetewale,[11]
And many a clowe-gilofre[12];
And notemuge[13] to put in ale,
Whether it be moyste or stale,
Or for to leye in cofre.[14]

The briddes[15] singe, it is no nay,[16]
The sparhauk[17] and the papejay,[18]
That joye it was to here;
The thrustlecok[19] made eek his lay,
The wodedowve[20] upon the spray
She sang ful loude and clere.

1 unchaste man, debauchee
2 flower of the bramble (dog-rose)
3 hip (fruit of the dog-rose)
4 got upon
5 a kind of lance, probably rather short
6 rides hard
7 to him
8 happened
9 a grievous misfortune
10 licorice
11 zedoary (used in medicine as a stimulant)
12 clove
13 nutmeg
14 a box
15 birds
16 it cannot be denied
17 sparrow-hawk
18 parrot
19 male thrush
20 wood-dove

Sir Thopas fil in[1] love-longinge
Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,
And priked as he were wood[2];
His faire stede in his prikinge
So swatte[3] that men mighte him wringe;
His sydes were al blood.

Sir Thopas eek so wery was,
For prikinge on the softe gras —
So fiers[4] was his corage —
That doun he leyde him in that plas,
To make his stede som solas,
And yaf him good forage.

'O Seinte Marie, *ben'cite*[5]!
What eyleth this love at me,[6]
To binde[7] me so sore?
Me dremed[8] al this night, pardee,[9]
An elf-queen shal my lemman be,
And slepe under my gore.[10]

An elf-queen wol I love, ywis,[11]
For in this world no womman is
Worthy to be my make,[12]
In toune[13];
Alle othere wommen I forsake,
And to an elf-queen I me take,
By dale and eek by doune[14]!'

Into his sadel he clamb anoon,
And priketh over style[15] and stoon,
An elf-queen for t' espye,

1 fell into
2 as if he were mad
3 sweat
4 fierce
5 *benedicite*, bless ye (the Lord)
6 with respect to me
7 enthral
8 I dreamed
9 F. *par Dieu*
10 garment
11 certainly, truly
12 mate
13 in the town, in the district (a mere verse-tag)
14 down, hill
15 stile

Til he so longe had riden and goon
That he fond, in a privee woon,[1]
The contree of Fairye
So wilde;
For in that contree was ther noon
That to him dorste ryde or goon,[2]
Neither wyf ne childe,

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,[3]
(His name was Sir Olifaunt[4]),
A perilous man of dede.
He seyde: 'Child,[5] by Termagaunt,[6]
But-if[7] thou prike out of myn haunt,
Anon I slee[8] thy stede
With mace.
Heer is the queen of Fayerye,
With harpe and pype and simphonye,[9]
Dwelling in this place.'

The childe seyde: 'Also mote I thee,[10]
To-morwe wol I mete thee,
Whan I have myn armoure;
And yet I hope, *par ma fay*,[11]
That thou shalt with this launcegay
Abyen it ful soure[12];
Thy mawe[13]
Shal I percen, if I may,
Er it be fully pryme of day,[14]
For heer thou shalt be slawe.[15]'

Sir Thopas drow abak[16] ful faste;
This geaunt at him stones caste
Out of a fel[17] staf-slinge[18];

[1] secret retreat
[2] This line is supplied from an inferior MS.
[3] giant
[4] Elephant
[5] title of a young squire or knight
[6] a Saracen idol
[7] unless
[8] will slay
[9] a kind of tabor
[10] as I may thrive
[11] by my faith
[12] pay for it bitterly
[13] maw, stomach
[14] prime = 6–9 A.M.; fully prime = 9 A.M.
[15] slain
[16] drew back
[17] deadly
[18] sling fastened to a stick

But faire escapeth Child Thopas,
And al it was thurgh Goddes gras,[1]
And thurgh his fair beringe.

Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale
Merier than the nightingale,
For now I wol yow roune[2]
How Sir Thopas, with sydes smale,
Priking over hil and dale,
Is come agayn to toune.

His merie men comanded he
To make him bothe game[3] and glee,
For nedes moste he fighte
With a geaunt with hevedes[4] three,
For paramour[5] and jolitee[6]
Of oon[7] that shoon[8] ful brighte.

'Do[9] come,' he seyde, 'my min[i]strales
And gestours,[10] for to tellen tales
Anon, in[11] myn arminge;
Of romances that been royales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eek of love-lykinge.'

They fette him first the swete wyn,
And mede[12] eek in a maselyn,[13]
And royal spicerye[14]
Of gingebreed[15] that was ful fyn,
And lycorys, and eek comyn,[16]
With sugre that is so trye.[17]

1 grace, favor
2 relate (*prop.* whisper)
3 sport
4 heads
5 love
6 amusement
7 one
8 shone
9 cause to
10 story-tellers
11 during
12 mead
13 maple bowl
14 mixture of spices
15 preserved ginger
16 cumin
17 choice

5. Merier . . . nightingale: borrowed by Chaucer from *Sir Bevis of Hampton.*

Of clooth of lake[3] fyn and clere
A breech[4] and eek a sherte;
And next his sherte an aketoun,[5]
And over that an habergeoun,[6]
For[7] percinge of his herte;

And over that a fyn hauberk[8]
Was al ywroght of Jewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate[9];
And over that his cote-armour,[10]
As whyt as is a lily-flour,
In which he wol debate.[11]

His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And therin was a bores heed,
A charbocle[12] bisyde;
And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that 'The geaunt shal be deed,
Bityde what bityde[13]!'

His jambeux[14] were of quirboilly,[15]
His swerdes shethe of yvory,
His helm of laton[16] bright;
His sadel was of rewel-boon[17];
His brydel as the sonne shoon,
Or as the mone light.

His spere was of fyn ciprees,[18]
That bodeth werre, and nothing[19] pees,
The heed ful sharpe ygrounde;

[1] put on
[2] flesh
[3] linen
[4] pair of breeches
[5] short, sleeveless tunic
[6] coat of mail
[7] as protection against
[8] hauberk, coat of mail
[9] breastplate on the front of the hauberk (?)
[10] a surcoat, not of metal
[11] combat
[12] carbuncle
[13] happen what may happen
[14] leg-pieces
[15] boiled leather, dried very hard (F. *cuir bouilli*)
[16] latten (metal compounded chiefly of copper and zinc)
[17] walrus-ivory
[18] cypress-wood (as associated with death)
[19] by no means

His stede was al dappel-gray,
It gooth an ambel[1] in the way,
Ful softely and rounde[2]
In londe.

Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit[3]!
If ye wol any more of it,
To telle it wol I fonde.[4]

II

Now hold your mouth, *par charitee*,[5]
Bothe knight and lady free,
And herkneth to my spelle[6];
Of bataille and of chivalry,
And of ladyes love-drury,[7]
Anon I wol yow telle.

Men speke of romances of prys,[8] —
Of Horn Child and of Ypotys,
Of Bevis and Sir Gy,
Of Sir Libeux and Pleyndamour;
But Sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of royal chivalry.

[1] at an ambling pace
[2] with an easy motion
[3] a division of a song or poem
[4] endeavor
[5] for charity
[6] story
[7] courtship
[8] renown

15. The romance of Horn appears in two forms, *King Horn* (see p. 11) nd *Horn Childe*. Chaucer probably refers to *Horn Childe*.

The romance of *Sir Ypotis* has not much in common with the others entioned here; in it the Emperor Adrian interrogates the child Ypotis as to atters of God's law.

16. *Sir Bevis of Hampton* and *Sir Guy of Warwick* are two of the longest nd dullest of mediæval romances.

17. Sir Libeux: a romance entitled *Lybeaus Disconus* (*The Fair Unknown*).

Pleyndamour: no romance of this name is known; the original must have een in French.

His gode stede al he bistrood,
And forth upon his wey he glood[1]
As sparkle out of the bronde[2];
Upon his crest he bar a tour,[3]
And therin stiked[4] a lily-flour;
God shilde his cors[5] fro shonde[6]!

And for he was a knight auntrous,[7]
He nolde[8] slepen in non hous,
But liggen[9] in his hode[10];
His brighte helm was his wonger,[11]
And by him baiteth[12] his dextrer[13]
Of[14] herbes fyne and gode.

Himself drank water of the wel,
As did the knight Sir Percivel,
So worthy under wede,[15]
Til on a day——

[1] glided
[2] burning wood, brand
[3] tower
[4] fixed
[5] body
[6] shame, disgrace
[7] adventurous
[8] would not
[9] lie
[10] hood
[11] pillow (cf. *wang*
[12] feeds
[13] courser
[14] on
[15] well-looking in l

13. A reference to the romance, *Sir Perceval of Galles.*

TALES

CHAUCER, PRIORESS' TALE: THE LITTLE CHOIR-BOY

See the general references on Chaucer at the close of the introductory note Sir *Thopas*, p. 108.

PROLOGUE

O Lord our lord, thy name how merveillous
Is in this large worlde ysprad[1] (quod she);
For noght only thy laude precious
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parfourned[2] is, for on the brest soukinge[3]
Som tyme shewen they thyn heryinge.[4]

Wherfor in laude, as I best can or may,
Of thee, and of the whyte lily-flour
Which that thee bar,[5] and is a mayde alway,
To telle a storie I wol do my labour;
Not that I may encresen hir honour;
For she hirself is honour, and the rote
Of bountee, next hir Sone, and soules bote.[6]

O moder mayde! O mayde moder free!
O bush unbrent,[7] brenninge in Moyses sighte,
That ravisedest[8] doun fro the deitee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the Goost[9] that in th' alighte,
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,

read abroad
rfected (cf. Ps. 8. 2, Vulg.; Matt. 21. 16)
cking
4 praise
5 bore
6 healing, salvation
7 unburnt (Exod. 3. 2)
8 didst draw
9 Spirit (Matt. 1. 18)

. men of dignitee: such as monks or clergy in choirs

Conceived was the Fadres Sapience,[1]
Help me to telle it in thy reverence!

Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;
For somtyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
Thou goost biforn,[2] of thy benignitee,
And getest us the light, thurgh thy preyere,
To gyden us unto thy Sone so dere.

My conning is so wayk, o blisful quene,
For to declare thy grete worthinesse,
That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
But as a child of twelf monthe old, or lesse,
That can unnethes[3] any word expresse,
Right so fare I; and therfor I yow preye,
Gydeth my song that I shal of yow seye.

THE TALE

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
Amonges Cristen folk, a Jewerye,[4]
Sustened by a lord of that contree
For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
Hateful to Crist and to his companye;
And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende,
For it was free, and open at either ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
Children an heep,[5] ycomen of Cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
Swich maner doctrine[6] as men used there,
This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
As smale children doon in hir childhede.

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. 1.24
[2] dost anticipate
[3] with difficulty
[4] ghetto, Jews' quarter
[5] number
[6] kind of learning

Among thise children was a widwes sone,
A litel clergeon,[1] seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,[2]
And eek also, wheras[3] he saugh th' image
Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye
His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone ytaught
Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
For sely[4] child wol alday[5] sone lere[6];
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist did reverence.

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,[7]
He *Alma Redemptoris* herde singe,
As children lerned hir antiphoner[8];
And, as he dorste, he drough him ner[9] and ner,
And herkned ay the wordes and the note,[10]
Til he the firste vers coude[11] al by rote.

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,
For he so yong and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felaw gan he preye
T' expounden him this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in usage;

[1] choir-boy
[2] custom
[3] where
[4] good
[5] always
[6] learn; the line is a proverb
[7] small prayer-book, from which children were taught to read
[8] anthem-book
[9] nearer
[10] tune
[11] knew

17. The eleventh-century hymn 'Alma Redemptoris mater, quæ pervia cœli,' one of four antiphons addressed to the Virgin. It is used from the first Sunday in Advent to the Feast of the Purification (February 2). It has been translated by Cardinal Newman and others.

This preyde he him to construe and declare
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes[1] bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
Answerde him thus: 'This song, I have herd s
Was maked of our blisful lady free,
Hir to salue,[2] and eek hir for to preye
To been our help and socour whan we deye.
I can no more expounde in this matere;
I lerne song, I can[3] but smal grammere.'

'And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes moder?' seyde this innocent;
'Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To conne[4] it al, er Cristemasse is went;
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,[5]
And shal be beten thryës in an houre,
I wol it conne, our lady to honoure.'

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,
And than he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word, acording with the note;
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte —
To scoleward[6] and homward whan he wente;
On Cristes moder set was his entente.[7]

As I have seyd, thurghout the Jewerye
This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye
O alma Redemptoris evermo.[8]
The swetnes hath his herte perced so
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
He can nat stinte[9] of singing by the weye.

1 knees
2 greet
3 know
4 learn
5 disgraced
6 towards school
7 thought,
8 evermore
9 cease

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swal,[1] and seide: 'O Hebraik peple, allas!
Is this to yow a thing that is honest,[2]
That swich a boy shal walken as him lest[3]
In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,[4]
Which is agayn your lawes[5] reverence?'

Fro thennes forth the Jewes han[6] conspyred
This innocent out of this world to chace;
An homicyde therto han they hyred,
That in an aley[7] hadde a privee place;
And as the child gan forby for to pace,
This cursed Jew him hente[8] and heeld him faste,
And kitte[9] his throte, and in a pit him caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe[10] they him threwe
Wheras these Jewes purgen hir entraille.
O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,[11]
What may your yvel entente yow availle?
Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille;
And namely ther[12] th' onour of God shal sprede,
The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

'O martir, souded to[13] virginitee!
Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon[14]
The whyte Lamb celestial,' quod she,
'Of which the grete evangelist, Seint John,
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon
Biforn this Lamb, and singe a song al newe,
That never, fleshly,[15] wommen they ne knewe.'

1 swelled
2 honorable
3 it pleases
4 to such purport
5 due to your law
6 have
7 alley
8 seized
9 cut
10 outhouse
11 made up of new Herods
12 especially where
13 confirmed in
14 without ceasing; cf. Rev. 14. 4
15 carnally

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
After hir litel child, but he cam noght;
For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
With face pale of[1] drede and bisy thoght,
She hath at scole and elleswher him soght,
Til finally she gan so fer espye[2]
That he last seyn was in the Jewerye.

With modres[3] pitee in hir brest enclosed,
She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,
To every place wher she hath supposed
By lyklihede hir litel child to finde;
And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte —
Among the cursed Jewes she him soghte.

She frayneth[4] and she preyeth pitously
To every Jew that dwelte in thilke[5] place,
To telle hir if hir child wente oght forby.[6]
They seyde, 'Nay'; but Jesu, of his grace,
Yaf[7] in hir thought, inwith[8] a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she cryde
Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete God, that parfournest thy laude
By mouth of innocents, lo heer[9] thy might!
This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
Ther[10] he with throte ycorven[11] lay upright,
He *Alma Redemptoris* gan to singe
So loude that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
In coomen, for to wondre upon this thing,

1 from
2 find out
3 mother's
4 asks questions
5 that
6 had chanced to go by
7 gave
8 within
9 here
10 where
11 cut, slashed

And hastily they for the provost[1] sente;
He cam anon, withouten tarying,
And herieth[2] Crist that is of heven King,
And eek his moder, honour of mankinde;
And, after that, the Jewes leet he binde.[3]

This child with pitous lamentacioun
Uptaken was, singing his song alway;
And with honour of greet processioun
They carien him unto the nexte[4] abbay.
His moder swowning by the bere lay;
Unnethe might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel[5] bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth echon[6]
This provost dooth[7] thise Jewes for to sterve[8]
That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
He nolde no swich cursednesse[9] observe.[10]
Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve;
Therfor with wilde hors[11] he dide hem drawe,[12]
And after that he heng hem[13] by the lawe.

Upon his bere ay lyth[14] this innocent
Biforn the chief auter,[15] whyl masse laste,
And after that, the abbot with his covent[16]
Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
And whan they holy water on him caste,
Yet spak this child, whan spreynd[17] was holy water,
And song: *O alma Redemptoris mater!*

This abbot, which that was an holy man —
As monkes been, or elles oghten be —

1 chief magistrate
2 praises
3 he caused to be bound
4 nearest
5 Cf. Matt. 2. 18
6 each one
7 causes
8 die
9 wickedness
10 favor
11 horses
12 had them drawn
13 them
14 lies
15 altar
16 monks of the convent
17 sprinkled

This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
And seyde: 'O dere child, I halse[1] thee
In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,
Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge[2]?'

'My throte is cut unto my nekke-boon,'
Seyde this child, 'and, as by wey of kinde,[3]
I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon;
But Jesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde,
Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde;
And, for the worship of his moder dere,
Yet may I singe *O alma* loude and clere.

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
I lovede alwey, as after my conninge[4];
And whan that I my lyf sholde[5] forlete,
To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
This antem[6] verraily in my deyinge,
As ye han herd; and, whan that I had songe
Me thoughte she leyde a greyn upon my tong

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot[7] certeyn
In honour of that blisful mayden free,
Til fro my tonge oftaken is the greyn;
And afterward thus seyde she to me:
"My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge ytake;
Be nat agast,[8] I wol thee nat forsake."'

This holy monk — this abbot, him mene I —
His tonge outcaughte, and took awey the gre
And he yaf up the goost ful softely.

[1] implore
[2] as it appears to me
[3] nature
[4] within the limits of my knowledge
[5] ought to have
[6] anthem

And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
His salte teres trikled doun as reyn,
And gruf[1] he fil al plat[2] upon the grounde,
And stille he lay as he had been ybounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement
Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere;
And after that they ryse, and forth ben went,
And toke awey this martir fro his bere,
And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
Enclosen they his litel body swete;
Ther[3] he is now, God leve[4] us for to mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln,[5] slayn also
With[6] cursed Jewes, as it is notable—
For it nis but a litel whyle ago—
Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That, of his mercy, God so merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplye,
For reverence of his moder Marye.

THE IMPRISONED WIFE

The Seven Sages of Rome, from which this story is taken, is the European counterpart of the Oriental *Book of Sindibād*, ultimately, according to general scholarly belief, of Indian origin. *The Book of Sindibād* exists in a number of versions (Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Persian, etc.), and the European *Seven Sages* in many more, the latter being found in one or more forms in almost every language of Europe. As late as 1892 a Lithuanian version was printed at Plymouth, Pennsylvania.

How the Oriental outline of the story was carried westward is a matter of conjecture. Since only four of the fifteen tales in the European collection are similar to those in any Eastern versions, it has been supposed that the transmission was probably oral, and a crusader returning from the Holy Land has been suggested as the possible transmitter. In any case, the most important element borrowed from the East is the frame or general plan of a series of tales told by seven wise men in defending a young prince against the accusations

1 face downward, groveling
2 flat
3 where
4 grant
5 Cf. Skeat's note
6 by

of the queen, his stepmother, and the tales told by the queen in reply. Like the frames of *The Arabian Nights*, of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and of more modern groups, down to Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, this serves not only as a device by which to unite a number of tales, but also to account in some measure for the general character of the tales themselves.

The following selection is from the Cottonian manuscript of the Middle English version (British Museum Cotton Galba E. 9). This manuscript (apparently copied from a lost earlier one) has been dated as of the first third of the fifteenth century. For a full discussion of dates and other details, and *The Seven Sages of Rome* in general, see the edition by Killis Campbell (Ginn, 1907) from which our text (including lines 3236–3726 of the poem), with certain emendations and changes of punctuation, is taken.

Among the most interesting analogues and variants of our *Inclusa*-story (which is not one of those found in the Oriental versions) are Plautus, *Miles Gloriosus* (cf. Act 2); Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* I. 22; *The Thousand and One Nights*, ed. Habicht, II. 140; Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* I. 281.

In þe kingdom of Hungery
Wond[1] a nobil knyght whylom,
A rightwis man and whise of dome.[2]
He dremyd þus opon a nyght,
Þat he lufed a lady bryght,
Bot he ne wist in what contre
Þat þe lady myght funden be.
Him thoght he knew hir wele bi kinde,
And wele he hopid he sold hir finde.
Þat same time dremyd þat ladi bright,
And thoght þat sho sold luf a knight;
Bot sho wist noght of what land,
Ne in whate stede[3] he was dweland,[4]
Ne his name knew sho nathing;
Þarfore made sho grete murnyng.
Opon þe morn, þe stori sayse,
Þe knight toke horses and hernays,[5]
And went to seke þat lady bright
Þat him dremyd of þat nyght.
Þat jornay unto him was hard,

[1] dwelt
[2] judgment
[3] place
[4] dwelling

For he wist noght whederward
Þat he sold tak þe redy way;
Þarfore he drowped[1] night and day.
So he traveld monethes thre,
And no signe of hyr kowth he se;
Bot wele in hert he hoped ay
Þat he sold hir se sum day.
So fer þe knyght his way had nomen
Þat into Hungeri es he cumen.
Þare he findes a faire castele
Bi þe se-syde, wroght ful wele;
Þarin stode a towre ful hee;
Fairer saw he never with ee.
An erl wond in þat castele
Þat aght[2] þe lordship ilka dele.
With him he had a worthly wife,
Þe fairest lady þat had lyfe.
Þe erl was jeluse of þat lady;
He sperid[3] hir in þe toure forþi[4];
Sho might noght out by day ne night,
To speke with swier[5] ne with knight.
In þat land was were[6] ful strang,
Of kinges and lordes, þat lasted lang.
Þare come ridand þat nobil knight,
Þat so had soght þe lady bright;
He luked up unto þe toure,
And saw þe lady, white so[7] flowre,
Lig[8] in a window barred with stele.
Þan in his hert he wist ful wele
Þat þis lady was þe same
Þat he had so dremyd of at hame.
He luked up unto þe toure,
And merily sang he of amowre.[9]

1 drooped
2 owned, possessed
3 bolted, locked
4 for that reason, therefore
5 squire
6 war
7 as
8 lie
9 love

And when sho herd him so bigyn,
Unnethes might þat ladi blyn[1]
Þat sho ne had cald him hir unto;
Bot for hir lord sho durst noght do.
He sat biside under a tre,
At þe ches,[2] a knyght and he.
Þis knyght percayved þe erl þare.
Unto þe lady he mened[3] na mare;
Bot til[4] þe erl he rides ful right,
And of his palfray down he lyght.
On his kne sone he him set,
And þe erl ful faire he gret;
'Sir Erl,' he said, 'I am a knight,
Out of my cuntre cumen for fight;
Þeder ogayn dar I noght gane,
For a knight þare have I slane;
Þarfore, sir, if þi willes be,
Þus am I cumen to dwel with þe.
My famen er ful steren[5] and stout;
Þai have destroyed my landes obout.'
Þe erl said: 'So mot I þe,
Right so fares my famen with me;
So þat I have no socoure
Bot þis castel and þis toure.
Þarfore, sir, þou ert welkum here;
Of swilk a man have I mystere[6];
And if þou wil me help trewly,
I sal þe gif grete mede forthy.'
'Ȝis, sir,' he sayd, 'at my power,
Ay whils I my armes bere.'
With þe erl þus dwels þe knight,
Al for luf of þe lady bryght.
Þar was na knight þat bare shelde
Þat might so wele his wapen welde;

[1] restrain herself
[2] chess
[3] made moan
[4] to
[5] stern
[6] need

Thorgh strenkith of hand and Godes grace
He overcome al þe erles fase.[1]
Þe erl him lufed and honord þan
Mare þan any oþer man;
He made hym steward of al his land,
And bad þe men bow til hys hand.
Sone efter þat, opon a day,
Þe knyght allane went him to play,
Under þe toure whare þe lady was;
Þare he made him grete solace.
Þe lady in a wyndow lay,
And saw þe knyght allane him play;
A letter sone sho kest hym tyll,
Wharby he might wit[2] al hir will.
Þe knight toke up þe parchemyne,
And red þe Franche ful fayre and fyne;
And alsone als he red it had,
Was he never in hert so glad;
By þat letter þe knight wele kend
Þat his travayl was cumen till end.
Ful sare him langed to hyr at[3] ga,
Prevely, withowten ma;
And wele he saw þat, by na gyn,[4]
Allane to hir myght he noght wyn[5];
Þar was bot a dur and a way,
And þarof bare þe erl þe kay.
So on a day, with mylde worde,
Þe knyght spekes unto hys lord,
And said: 'Sir, of þi gude grace,
I pray þe to gif me a place
Bifore þis towre, þat I may big[6]
A litel place in for to lig,
And þat I mai my wonyng have
At myne ese if ȝe vowchesave.'

[1] foes
[2] know
[3] to
[4] device
[5] succeed in going
[6] build

Þat I may cum in prevete
Unto þe lady and sho to me.'
'Sertes, sir,' said þe mason sone,
'Als þou has said, it sal be done.'
Hastily he takes hys tole,[1]
And in þe toure he made a hole,
Þat þe knight might cum þe ladi untill,
Night and day, at þaire owyn will.
When þe lady wist of þis,
Hir thoght hir hert was ful of blis.
Þe knight quit[2] wele þe servise
Of þe mason for his quayntyse[3]:
He slogh him sone, þat ilk[e] day,
For fered[4] þat he sold oght say.
And efterward, ful sone onane,[5]
Into þe toure þe knight gan gane;
Thurgh þe hole gan he pas,
Til he come whare þe lady was.
Bitwene þam was grete joy and blis;
In armes ful curtaysly þai kys.
Wele sho wist it was þat knyght
Þat sho had dremyd of anyght.
Sho said: 'Sir, þou art welkum here.'
He said: 'Gramercy,[6] lady dere.'
To hir he talde of his dremeing,
And sho him talde of þe same thing;
And when þai wist it was sertayn,
Ayther of oþer was ful fayn.
Sho lete him wirk þare al his will;
And seþen he said þe lady untyll:
'Dame, I dar no lenger byde,
For herein may þou me noght hide.
And þarfore, dame, have now goday;
I sal cum ogayn when I may.'

[1] tool
[2] repaid
[3] cunning, skill
[4] fear
[5] at once
[6] many thanks

Þe lady, at þaire departyng.[1]
Gaf þe knight a gude gold ring,
And said: 'Sir, I pray to þe,
When þou sese þis, thinke on me.'
At[2] þe lady þe ryng he tase,
And graythly[3] til þe hole he gase;
Þe ring he put his fynger on,
And doun ogayn he hied him sone
Thurgh þe hole was made of stane:
A meri man þe knight was ane.
Þe knyght went unto þe hall,
Unto þe erl and his menȝe[4] all;
Þe erl gert him sit ful nere,
And to hym made he meri chere.
Als þai spak of divers thing,
Þe erl saw his whives ring
Opon þe knyghtes fynger bare;
He had wonder how it was þare.
He wist wele þar was none slike,[5]
Ne þat none might be made so like;
And ever he thinkes in hert styll
How ani man might come her till.
Styl he held al in his thoght;
Unto þe knyght he sayd right noght,
Bot up he rase bilyve onane;
Unto his whife he thoght to gane,
For to wit whare hir ring was.
Þe knight perȝayved al þe case;
He hies als fast als he may
Tite[6] until hys preve way.
Þe erl hies to þe lady fre,
Bot þe knyght come lang or[7] he;
Unto þe lady þe ring he cast,

[1] parting, separation
[2] from
[3] quickly
[4] retinue
[5] such
[6] quickly

And doun ogayn he hies him fast.
Þe lady has þe ring up hent;
Sho wist ful wele þan how it went;
Sho did it in hir purs in horde,[1]
And sone þarefter come hir lorde,
And with gude chere he gan hir glade,
And asked hyr what chere sho made.
Sho said sho myght have no solace,
So was sho presond in þat place
Fra þe sight of alkins[2] men:
'How may I any kumforth ken?'
'Dame,' said þe erl ful sone,
'For grete derenes es yt done,
And for I wil nane change þi thoght.'
Þe lady said: 'Sir, thinkes it noght;
Þar es no knight in no cuntre
Þat might change my luf fra þe;
And sen ȝe wil þat it be þus,
At ȝowre lyking habide me bus,[3]
For oþer cumforth kepe[4] I nane
Bot of God and of ȝow allane.'
  Þe erl thoght ȝit on oþer thing.
'Dame,' he said, 'whare es þi ring
Þat I þe gaf of gold ful fyne?
Lat me se it, leman myne.'
Þe lady answerd hym unto:
'Sir, what sal ȝe þarwith do?
Wene ȝe þat it be oway
For[5] I were it noght ilk day?
Nai, sir, dredes ȝow never a dele,
For I sal ȝeme[6] it wonder wele.'
'Dame,' he sayd, 'for luf of me,
A sight þarof þat I might se;
And, sertes, I ask it for none ill.'

[1] hoard
[2] of every kind
[3] it behooves me to abide
[4] care for
[5] because
[6] care for

Þe lady, at þaire departyng,[1]
Gaf þe knight a gude gold ring,
And said: 'Sir, I pray to þe,
When þou sese þis, thinke on me.'
At[2] þe lady þe ryng he tase,
And graythly[3] til þe hole he gase;
Þe ring he put his fynger on,
And doun ogayn he hied him sone
Thurgh þe hole was made of stane:
A meri man þe knight was ane.
Þe knyght went unto þe hall,
Unto þe erl and his menȝe[4] all;
Þe erl gert him sit ful nere,
And to hym made he meri chere.
Als þai spak of divers thing,
Þe erl saw his whives ring
Opon þe knyghtes fynger bare;
He had wonder how it was þare.
He wist wele þar was none slike,[5]
Ne þat none might be made so like;
And ever he thinkes in hert styll
How ani man might come her till.
Styl he held al in his thoght;
Unto þe knyght he sayd right noght,
Bot up he rase bilyve onane;
Unto his whife he thoght to gane,
For to wit whare hir ring was.
Þe knight perzayved al þe case;
He hies als fast als he may
Tite[6] until hys preve way.
Þe erl hies to þe lady fre,
Bot þe knyght come lang or[7] he;
Unto þe lady þe ring he cast,

1 parting, separation
2 from
3 quickly
4 retinue
5 such
6 quickly
7 before

And doun ogayn he hies him fast.
Þe lady has þe ring up hent;
Sho wist ful wele þan how it went;
Sho did it in hir purs in horde,[1]
And sone þarefter come hir lorde,
And with gude chere he gan hir glade,
And asked hyr what chere sho made.
Sho said sho myght have no solace,
So was sho presond in þat place
Fra þe sight of alkins[2] men:
'How may I any kumforth ken?'
'Dame,' said þe erl ful sone,
'For grete derenes es yt done,
And for I wil nane change þi thoght.'
Þe lady said: 'Sir, thinkes it noght;
Þar es no knight in no cuntre
Þat might change my luf fra þe;
And sen ȝe wil þat it be þus,
At ȝowre lyking habide me bus,[3]
For oþer cumforth kepe[4] I nane
Bot of God and of ȝow allane.'
  Þe erl thoght ȝit on oþer thing.
'Dame,' he said, 'whare es þi ring
Þat I þe gaf of gold ful fyne?
Lat me se it, leman myne.'
Þe lady answerd hym unto:
'Sir, what sal ȝe þarwith do?
Wene ȝe þat it be oway
For[5] I were it noght ilk day?
Nai, sir, dredes ȝow never a dele,
For I sal ȝeme[6] it wonder wele.'
'Dame,' he sayd, 'for luf of me,
A sight þarof þat I might se;
And, sertes, I ask it for none ill.'

[1] hoard
[2] of every kind
[3] it behooves me to abide
[4] care for
[5] because
[6] care for

Sho said: 'Sir, gladly at ȝowre will.'
Out of hir purs þe ring sho toke;
Þe lord gan graythly on hir loke.
'Lo! sir,' sho said, 'here is my ring.'
Þe erl had mervail of þis thing,
Þat it was [so] like, by syght,
Þe ring þat he saw of his knight;
Bot wele he hopid[1] and weterly[2]
Þat nane might win to þe lady,
Ne þat hir ring was noght hir fra,
Bot þat þai had bene like, þai twa.
He was wele solast of þat sight,
And þare he dwelled al þat night;
Þe lady bi hirself oft smyled,
And thoght þat he was wele bigild.
Opon þe morn þe knyght up rase,
And to þe kirk graythly he gase,
Goddes werkes þare for to wirk.
Seþen com þe erl unto þe kyrk;
A mes[3] ful sone þan gert he sing,
In honowre of oure Hevyn-kyng.
Þe erl sent þan hastily
Efter þe knyght of Hungery;
Þe knyght come sone þe erl untill.
Þe erl said: 'Sir, if [þat] þou will,
Þou sal wend to wod with me,
At[4] hunt, and solace for to se.'
Þe knyght answerd wordes hende[5]:
'Sir, to wod may I noght wende,
For me es cumen new tiþand[6]
Þat makes me ful wele lykand,[7]
Fra my cuntre withowten lese[8] —
Þat my frendes haves made mi pese

[4] to
[5] courteous
[6] tidings
[7] pleased
[8] deception

For þat knight þat I have slayn;
And of þir[1] tiþandes am I fayn.
And, sir, þir[2] tiþandes es me broght
Bi my leman, þat has me soght
Heder out of myne awin cuntre.
Þarfore, sir, if ȝowre wil be,
Þis day I pray ȝow with me ete,
And se my leman at þe mete,
And for to make cumforth hir till.'
Þe erl said: 'Gladly I will
Do al þe comforth þat I can
Bath to þe and þi leman;
Whenso þou will, send efter me,
And smertly[3] sal I cum to þe.'
  Þan went þe erl to his solace,
Unto þe wod to mak his chace;
And þe knight went sone onane,
And ordand[4] mete and drink gud wane.[5]
His hows he dight[6] on gude aray;
And smertly þan he toke þe way
Unto þe lady faire and bright,
And gert þat sho war gayly dyght
In gold garmentes, richely wroght,
And talde hir al how he has thoght
Þat ilk day sho and hir lord
Sold bath togeder et[7] of a bord,
And how hir lord sold understand
Þat sho war cumen out of fer land.
Down he broght hir til his hows
Hamely,[8] als sho war his spows;
Bot hir garmentes war al new,
Þat no man in þat cuntre knew.
Opon hir fingers gert he done

1 these
2 MS. þis
3 quickly; MS. smeretly
4 ordered
5 quantity
6 fitted out

Gold ringes ful many one;
Hir hed was gayly dubed[1] and dyght
With gerlands al of gold ful bright;
So out of kenyng[2] he hir broght
Þat hir lord þan knew hir noght.
 Fra hunting come þe erl in hi[3];
Þe knyght him keped[4] ful curtaisly,
And til his hows he led him þan
For to ett with his leman.
Redy was ordaynd and dyght
Mete and drink for mani a knight.
Unto þe bord þe erl es set,
And his whif, with him to et.
Þe knight said: 'Þis es my leman;
Makes hir comforth if ȝe can.'
Þe erl bad sho sold be blith,
And he biheld hir mony a syth[5];
And wonder in his hert had he
How þat it so myght be
Þat any lady in þis life
Might be so like his owin wyfe.
Þe lady praied him blith to be,
And ett gladly, par charite.
Þe erl bad hir also be glad,
And loked on hir als he war mad;
Bot he thoght þe towre was so strang
Þat þare myght no man do him wrang,
Ne þat his whif might noght cum doun;
Þarfore trowed he no tresowne.
He thoght: 'Oft sythes bifalles slike,[6]
Þat mani wemen er oþer like,
Als was þe ring of gold fyne
Þat I wend wele had bene myne.'

[1] decorated
[2] recognition
[3] haste
[4] received
[5] time
[6] happen such things

Þus þe erl left all his care;
Of þis mater he thinkes no mare.
  Þan said þe knight on þis manere
Unto þe erl: 'Sir, mase[1] gude chere.'
Þe erl said: 'Sir, I þe pray,
Þe sertan soth þat þou me say
Wheþin[2] es þis faire lady
Þat þou has set at met me by?'
Þe knight said: 'Sir, bi my lewte,[3]
Sho es cumen fra myne awyn cuntre;
Sho es my leman þat has me soght,
And new tithandes sho haves me broght:
Mi pese es made for evermare
For þe knight þat I slogh þare,
So þat I may wend hardily
Hame ogayn my pese to cri;
And þarfore wil I with hir wende,
For to speke with ilka frende.'
'Sir, sekerly,' said þe erl þan,
'Me think þou has a fayre leman.'
  Whan þai had etyn and dronken inoghe,
Þai toke up mete, and clathes drogh.[4]
When þe erl liked to gane,
He toke leve at[5] þe knyghtes leman;
And hastily when he was went,
Þe knight and þe lady gent
Sone did of[6] þe riche aray
Þat þai had done on[7] þat day;
Hir awyn robe sone did þai on,
And dighted hir als sho was won.[8]
And þan sho toke þe preve sty[9]
Into þe toure ful hastily;

[1] make
[2] whence
[3] loyalty
[4] cleared the table
[5] of
[6] took off
[7] put on
[8] accustomed
[9] ascent

Þe knight gan playnly with hir pas
Until sho in hir chamber was.
And unnethes was þe knyght went out
When þe erl was gane obowt[1];
Unto þe toure he takes þe way
Als hastily als ever he may;
Þare he findes his lady,
Keped him ful curtaysely.
Þan was þe erl in hert ful glad
When he wist þat he hir had.
Him thoght ȝit[2] sho was like fully
To þe lady þat sat him by.
Þare þe erl dwelled al nyght,
And laiked[3] him with his lady bright.
Þat night þai wroght what þaire wils ware;
And on þat wise[4] þai met na mare.
Herkens now, how it bifell:
On þis maner stode þat castell,
Þat þe se ran fast byside;
Many gode shippes gan þare bide.
Whils þe erl of grete honowre
Lay with þe lady in þe towre,
Þe knight ordand a ship of sail,
And gert bere þeder gude vetaille[5];
Al his gode[6] þeder gert he bere,
Gold and silver and oþer gere.
On þe morn þe erl forth gase,
And left his lady in þat place.
Until þe kirk þan went he soñe
And herd his mes als he was wone;
And when he to þe kirk was gane,
Þe knyght went to þe towre onane,
And down he broght þe fayre lady

[1] had started to go
[2] yet, nevertheless
[3] sported
[4] in that manner
[5] provisions
[6] property

Into his hows ful prevely.
And of[1] þai toke þe clathes sone
Þat þe lady had hir on;
Þai dight hir in þe garmentes gay
Þat sho had on þat oþer day;
With gerlandes and with gleterand[2] thing
Was sho made out of knawyng.
When al was done als it sold be,
Unto þe erl, his lord, went he.
'Sir,' he sayd, 'I wald þe pray
Of a ded þis ilk day:
Þat þou wil gif me with þi hand
My leman, or[3] I pas þi lond,
Þat I mai wed hir to my whife;
For with hir wil I lede my lyfe.'
He sayd he thoght to wed hir þan
Þat had byfore ben his leman,
For luf of God and als for drede,
And for he sold þe better spede.
Þe erl said: 'Þat es gude scill,[4]
And als þou sais, syr, do I will.'
Sone þe erl cals knightes twa,
And bad þam sone þat þai sold ga
And feche þe lady unto þe kirk.
Þai war redy his wil to wirk;
To kirk þai led þat faire lady.
A preste was revist[5] hastily.
Þe erl come with meri chere,
Omang al þat folk in fere.[6]
His owin lady he toke bylive
And gaf þe knyght until his wive;
Þe prest þam weddes swith sone.
And als tite als þe mes was done,

[3] ere
[4] reason
[5] hurried thither
[6] in company, together

Þan was þare made grete menestrelsy
And þe knight and his lady
Went þam forth with grete solas
To þe ship whare his godes in was.
Þe erl went with þam þartill;
Þe knight went yn with ful gude will
Þe lady stode still on þe sand;
Þe erl toke hir by þe hand,
And bad þe knyght sold hir take,
Evermare to be his make.
Þare þe knyght toke þe lady,
And said to þe erl: 'Sir, gramercy
Of[1] þis and of[1] al oþer grace.'
Þus of þe erl hys leve he tase;
Þe wind blew, þai went þaire way.
Þus lost þe erl his whife for ay;
He gaf hir þus þe knyght to wed;
Þarfore ful sari life he led.
When þe knight was went with þe lady,
Þe erl wendes hame hastily;
Until þe toure þe way he tase,
To tel his lady how it was,
And how he had his knyght cunvayd[2];
He trowed noght how he was bitraid.
Until his toure þus wendes he right,
For to speke with his lady bright.
Into þe chamber[3] gan he ga,
And loked obout, bath to and fra;
He saw no syght of his lady;
Þarfore sone he wex sary.
Of hir cowth he nothing here;
Þan he wepid with sari chere.
Unto himself he gan him mene[4]
Þat al was soth als he had sene.

[1] for [2] accompanied [3] MS. chameber [4] lame

Þan wist he it was his lady
Þat at þe mete was set him by.
To wax wise þan he bigan;
Þarfore blamed him moni a man.

DAME SIRITH

Dame Sirith is preserved in Digby MS. 86, which has been assigned to date between 1272 and 1283, but by some as late as 1300.

With respect to the introduction of such fabliaux into England, Jusseranc says (*Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1. 225): '"Merry England" became acquainted with every form of French mirth; she imitated French chansons, and gave a place in her literature to French fabliaux. Nothing could be less congenial to the Anglo-Saxon race than the spirit of the fabliaux. This spirit, however, was acclimatized in England; and, like several other products of the French nind, was grafted on the original stock. The tree thus bore fruit which would ever have ripened as it did, without the Conquest. Such are the works of haucer, of Swift perhaps, and of Sterne. The most comic and *risqué* stories, ose same stories meant to raise a laugh which we have seen old women tell parlor windows, in order to cheer recluse anchoresses, were put into glish verse, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Thus we find ler an English form such stories as the tale of "La Chienne qui pleure" *me Sirith*],' etc.

With respect to *Dame Sirith*, Ker says (*English Literature: Medieval*, p. 172): 'This is far above the ordinary level of such things; it is a shameful practical joke, but there is more in it than this; the character of Dame Sirith, in her machinations to help the distressed lover of his neighbour's wife, is such as belongs to comedy and to satire, not to the ordinary vulgar "merry tale."'

The germ of the story has been traced back to India, where a belief in ıetempsychosis is prevalent, and thence passes on to the Persian (*Book of indibad*), the Arabic (see Clouston's *Book of Sindibad*, pp. 162 ff.) and the ebrew (*Mischle Sindbad*, tr. Cassel, pp. 268 ff.). About 1100 it is found the *Disciplina Clericalis* of Petrus Alphonsus, a converted Spanish Jew, with which compare *Gesta Romanorum*, chap. 28 (of the Latin). The English version here printed bears a rather close resemblance to that in the Greek *Syntipas* (ed. Eberhard, *Fabulæ Romanenses Græce Conscriptæ*, Leipzig, 1879). For other versions, and the transmission of the story in general, see Mätzner, *Altenglische Sprachproben* 1. 103–5; Elsner, *Untersuchungen zu dem Mittelnglischen Fabliau* 'Dame Siriz,' Berlin, 1877; McKnight, *Middle English Humorous Tales in Verse* (Boston, 1913), pp. xxi–xxxvii, 83–5.

This tale has many points of resemblance with a fragmentary interlude inted below (pp. 477–80). It has been conjectured that both have a common

source in an interlude now lost (see Heuser, in *Anglia*, Vol. 30, and McKnight, pp. xxxviii–ix).

The name of the old woman is sometimes found in the manuscript as *Siriz* (147 25, 148 4, 157 6, 8) and sometimes as *Siriþ* (150 7, 151 28, 153 1), but the rhymes show that the latter is undoubtedly correct (151 28; cf. 148 4); *wiþ* is similarly written *wiz* (148 5).

Ci comence le fablel et la cointise de Dame Siriz

As I com bi an waie,
Hof[1] on ich herde saie,
  Ful modi[2] mon and proud;
Wis he wes of lore,
And gouþlich[3] under gore,[4]
  And cloþed in fair sroud.[5]

To lovien he bigon
On[6] wedded wimmon —
  Þerof he hevede wrong;
His herte hire[7] wes alon,
Þat reste nevede[8] he non,
  Þe love wes so strong.

Wel ȝerne[9] he him biþoute[10]
Hou he hire gete moute,[11]
  In ani cunnes[12] wise.[13]
Þat befel on an day
Þe loverd wend away
  Hon his marchaundise.[14]

He wente him to þen inne
Þer[15] hoe[16] wonede inne,
  Þat wes riche won[17];

1 of
2 haughty
3 goodly
4 raiment
5 apparel
6 a
7 to her
8 had not
9 intently
10 considered
11 might
12 kind
13 way
14 trafficking
15 where
16 she
17 dwelling

And com into þen halle,
Þer hoe wes srud[1] wiþ palle,[2]
And þus he bigon:

[*Wilekin*] 'God almiȝtten be herinne!'
[*Margeri*] 'Welcome, so ich ever bide winne[3]!'
Quod þis wif.
'His hit[4] þi wille, com and site,
And wat is þi wille let me wite,
Mi leve lif.

Bi houre Loverd, hevene King,
If I mai don ani þing
Þat þe is lef,
Þou miȝtt finden me ful fre;
Fol bleþeli will I don for þe,
Wiþhouten gref.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Dame, God þe forȝelde[5]!
Bote on þat[6] þou me nout bimelde,[7]
Ne make þe wroþ,
Min hernde[8] will I to þe bede[9];
Bote wraþþen[10] þe for ani dede[11]
Were me loþ.'

[*Margeri*] 'Nai, iwis, Wilekin!
For noþing þat ever is min,
Þau[12] þou hit ȝirne,[13]
Houncurteis[14] ne will I be;
Ne con[15] I nout on[16] vilte,[17]
Ne nout I nelle lerne.

1 clothed
2 rich cloth
3 expect (eternal) happiness; MS. wenne
4 if it is
5 repay
6 on condition that
7 betray
8 errand
9 make known
10 anger
11 in any way
12 though
13 desire
14 discourteous
15 know
16 of
17 churlishness

source in an interlude now lost (see Heuser, in *Anglia*, Vol. 30, and McKnight, pp. xxxviii–ix).

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Þer[15] hoe[16] wonede inne,
Þat wes riche won[17];

[1] of
[2] haughty
[3] goodly
[4] raiment
[5] apparel
[6] a
[7] to her
[8] had not
[9] intently
[10] considered
[11] might
[12] kind
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[16] she
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And wat is þi wille let me wite,
Mi leve lif.

Bi houre Loverd, hevene King,
If I mai don ani þing
Þat þe is lef,
Þou miȝtt finden me ful fre;
Fol bleþeli will I don for þe,
Wiþhouten gref.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Dame, God þe forȝelde[5]!
Bote on þat[6] þou me nout bimelde,[7]
Ne make þe wroþ,
Min hernde[8] will I to þe bede[9];
Bote wraþþen[10] þe for ani dede[11]
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For noþing þat ever is min,
Þau[12] þou hit ȝirne,[13]
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Ne nout I nelle lerne.

[1] clothed
[2] rich cloth
[3] expect (eternal) happiness; MS. wenne
[4] if it is
[5] repay
[6] on condition that
[7] betray
[8] errand
[9] make known
[10] anger
[11] in any way
[12] though
[13] desire
[14] discourteous
[15] know
[16] of
[17] churlishness

Þou mai[ȝ]t saien al þine wille,
And I shal herknen and sitten stille,
Þat[1] þou have told.
And if þat þou me tellest skil,[2]
I shal don after þi wil —
Þat be þou bold.[3]

And þau þou saie me ani same,[4]
Ne shal I þe nouiȝt blame
For þi sawe.[5]'
[*Wilekin*] 'Nou Ich have wonne leve,[6]
Ʒif þat I þe[7] shulde greve,
Hit were hounlawe.[8]

Certes, dame, þou seist as hende,[9]
And I shal setten spel[10] on ende,
And tellen þe al —
Wat Ich wolde, and wi Ich com;
Ne con Ich saien non falsdom,
Ne non I ne shal.

Ich habbe iloved þe moni ȝer,
Þau Ich nabbe nout ben her
Mi love to schowe.
Wile þi loverd is in toune,
Ne mai no mon wiþ þe holden roune
Wiþ no þewe.[12]

Ʒurstendai[13] Ich herde saie,
As Ich wende bi þe waie,
Of oure sire[14];

[1] till
[2] what is reasonable
[3] confident, certain
[4] shame
[5] speech
[6] gained permission
[7] MS. me
[8] wrong
[9] a courteous one
[10] discourse

Me [1] tolde me þat he was gon
To þe feire of Botolfston [2]
In Lincolneschire.

And for Ich weste [3] þat he wes [4] houte,
Þarfore Ich am I igon aboute
To speken wiþ þe.
Him burþ [5] to liken wel his lif,
Þat miȝtte welde [6] secc [7] a wif [8]
In privite.

Dame, if hit is þi wille,
Boþ dernelike [9] and stille
Ich wille þe love.'
[*Margeri*] 'Þat wold I don for non þin[g],
Bi houre Loverd, hevene King,
Þat ous is bove [10]!

Ich habe mi loverd þat is mi spouse,
Þat maiden broute me to house
Mid menske [11] inou [12];
He loveþ me and Ich him wel,
Oure love is also trewe as stel,
Wiþhouten wou.[13]

Þau he be from hom on his hernde,
Ich were ounseli,[14] if Ich lernede
To ben on [15] hore.
Þat ne shal nevere be,
Þat I shal don selk falsete,
On bedde ne on flore;

hey
(St. Botolph's town)
s
eth

6 possess
7 such
8 MS. vif
9 secretly
10 above

11 honor
12 enow, enough
13 wrong
14 wicked
15 a

Never more his lifwile,[1]
Thau he were on hondred mile
Biȝende Rome,
For no þing ne shuld I take
Mon on erþe to ben mi make,[2]
Ar[3] his hom-come.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Dame, dame, torn[4] þi mod[5];
Þi curteisi was ever god,
And ȝet shal be;
For þe Loverd þat ous haveþ wrout,
Amend þi mod, and torn þi þout,
And rew[6] on me.'

[*Margeri*] 'We,[7] we! [h]oldest þou me a fol?
So Ich ever mote biden Ȝol,[8]
Þou art ounwis.
Mi þout ne shalt þou never[9] wende;
Mi loverd is curteis mon and hende,
And mon of pris;

And Ich am wif boþe god and trewe;
Trewer womon mai[10] no mon cnowe
Þen Ich am.
Þilke time shal[11] never bitide
Þat mon, for wouing ne þoru prude,[12]
Shal do me scham.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Swete levmon,[13] merci!
Same ne vilani
Ne bede I þe non;

1 lifetime
2 mate
3 ere
4 change
5 mind
6 have compassion
7 alas
8 Yule, Christmas
9 MS. newer
10 MS. ne mai
11 MS. ne shal
12 pride
13 MS. lenmon, *or* leumon (?)

Bote derne love I þe bede,
As mon þat wolde of love spede,
And fi[n]de won.[1] '

[*Margeri*] ' So bide Ich evere mete oþer drinke,
Her þou lesest al þi swinke.[2]
Þou migt gon hom, leve broþer,
For [ne] wille Ich þe love, ne non oþer
Bote mi wedde houssebonde;
To tellen hit þe ne wille Ich wonde.[3] '

[*Wilekin*] ' Certes, dame, þat me forþinkeþ[4];
An[d] wo is þe mon þa[t] muchel swinkeþ,
And at þe laste leseþ his sped!
To maken menis[5] his[6] him ned;
Bi[7] me I saie [hit] ful iwis,
Þat love þe — love þat I shal mis.
An[d], dame, have nou godne dai!
And þilke Loverd þat al welde[8] mai
Leve[9] þat þi þout so tourne
Þat Ich[10] for þe no leng[11] ne mourne.'

Drerimod[12] he wente awai,
And þoute boþe nigt and dai
Hire al for to wende.
A frend him radde[13] for to fare —
And leven al his muchele kare —
To Dame Siriþ[14] þe hende.

Þider he wente him anon,
So suiþe[15] so he migtte gon,
No mon he ni mette.

joy
toil
hesitate, fear
I am sorry for that
moans

6 is
7 about
8 wield
9 grant
10 MS. Ihc

11 longer
12 sad in heart
13 counseled
14 MS. Siriz
15 quickly

Ful he wes of tene[1] and treie[2];
Mid wordes milde and eke sleie[3]
Faire he hire grette.

[*Wilekin*] 'God þe iblessi, Dame Siriþ[4]!
Ich am icom to speken þe wiþ,[5]
For ful muchele nede;
And[6] Ich mai have help of þe,
þou shalt have, þat þou shalt se,
Ful riche mede.'

[*Sirith*] 'Welcomen art þou, leve sone;
And if Ich mai oþer cone[7]
In eni wise for þe do,
I shal strengþen me þerto;
Forþi,[8] leve sone, tel þou me
Wat þou woldest I dude for þe.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Bote, leve nelde,[9] ful evele I fare;
I lede mi lif wiþ tene and kare;

Wiþ muchel hounsele[10] ich lede mi lif,
And þat is for on suete wif
þat heiȝtte Margeri.
Ich have iloved hire moni dai,
And of hire love hoe seiz me nai;
Hider Ich com forþi.

Bote-if[11] hoe wende hire mod,
For serewe[12] mon[13] Ich wakese[14] wod,
Oþer miselve quelle.[15]
Ich hevede iþout miself to slo[16];
Forþen[17] radde[18] a frend me go
To þe, mi sereue telle.

1 vexation
2 grief
3 shrewd
4 MS. Siriz
5 MS. wiz
6 if

7 or know how to (can)
8 therefore
9 old lady
10 misfortune
11 unless
12 sorrow

17 theref
18 advise

He saide me, wiþhouten faille
Þat þou me couþest helpe and vaile,[1]
And bringen me of wo,
Þoru þine crafftes and þine dedes;
And Ich wile ȝeve þe riche mede[s],
Wiþ þat[2] hit be so.'

[*Sirith*] 'Benedicite be herinne[3]!
Her havest þou, sone, mikel sinne.[4]
Loverd, for his suete name,[5]
Lete þe þerfore haven no shame[6]!
Þou servest affter Godes grame,[7]
Wen þou seist on me silk[8] blame;
For Ich am old and sek and lame;
Seknesse haveþ maked me ful tame.
Blesse þe, blesse þe, leve knave,[9]
Leste þou mesaventer have
For þis lesing[10] þat is founden[11]
Oppon me, þat am harde ibo[u]nden!
Ich am on holi wimon,
On wicchecrafft nout I ne con,
Bote wiþ gode men[s] almesdede
Ilke dai mi lif I fede,
And bidde mi Pater Noster and mi Crede,
Þat Goed hem helpe at hore[12] nede
Þat helpen me mi lif to lede,
And leve þat hem mote wel spede.
His lif and his soule worþe ishend[13]
Þat þe to me þis hernde haveþ send;

[1] avail, assist
[2] provided that
[3] blessing be herein = God save us (an exclamation of surprise)
[4] sin; MS. senne
[5] MS. nome
[6] MS. shome
[7] anger; MS. grome
[8] such
[9] boy
[10] lie
[11] invented
[12] their
[13] disgraced

7. Flügel (*Matzke Mem. Vol.*, p. 95) prefers 'Benedicite! be herinne!' understanding 'God' as the subject of (opt. or imp.) 'be.'
9. Note the six rhyming lines, like the six below (21–26).

And leve me to ben iwreken[1]
On him þis shome me haveþ speken.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Leve nelde, bilef[2] al þis;
Me þinkeþ þa[t] þou art onwis.
Þe mon þat me to þe taute,[3]
He weste þat þou hous[4] couþest saute.[5]
Help, Dame Siriþ, if þou maut,[6]
To make me wiþ þe sueting saut,
And Ich wille geve þe gift ful stark[7]:
Moni a pound and moni a marke,
Warme pilche[8] and warme shon,
Wiþ þat min hernde be wel don.
Of muchel godlec[9] migt þou gelpe,[10]
If hit be so þat þou me helpe.'

[*Sirith*] 'Lig me nout, Wilekin, bi þi leute.[11]
Is hit þin hernest[12] þou tekest[13] me?
Lovest þou wel Dame Margeri?'

[*Wilekin*] 'Ʒe, nelde, witerli,[14]
Ich hire love! Hit mot me spille[15]
Bote ich gete hire to mi wille.'

[*Sirith*] 'Wat, god Wilekin, me reweþ þi scaþe[16];
Houre Loverd sende þe help raþe[17]!

Weste Hic hit migtte ben forholen,[18]
Me wolde þunche wel solen[19]
Þi wille for to fellen.[20]
Make me siker wiþ word on honde

[1] avenged
[2] leave
[3] directed
[4] us
[5] reconcile, bring to terms
[6] canst
[7] strong, large
[8] fur garments
[9] goodness, benefit
[10] boast
[11] loyalty
[12] earnest
[13] teachest
[14] truly, certainly
[15] destroy, ruin
[16] harm
[17] soon (early)
[18] concealed
[19] proper (solemn)
[20] MS. fullen

Þat þou wolt helen,[1] and I wile fonde[2]
   If Ich mai hire tellen.

For al þe world ne wold I nout
Þat Ich were to chapitre[3] ibrout
   For none selke[4] werkes.
Mi jugement were sone igiven —
To ben wiþ shome somer-driven[5]
   Wiþ[6] prestes and with clarkes.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Iwis, nelde, ne wold I
Þat þou hevedest vilani
   Ne shame, for mi goed.
Her I þe mi trouþe pligtte,
Ich shal helen bi[7] mi migtte,
   Bi þe holi roed!'

[*Sirith*] 'Welcome, Wilekin, hiderward!
Her havest imaked a foreward[8]
   Þat þe mai ful wel like.
Þou maigt[9] blesse þilke siþ,[10]
For þou maigt make þe ful bliþ;
   Dar[11] þou namore sike.[12]

To goderhele[13] ever come þou hider,
For sone will I gange þider,
   And maken hire hounderstonde.
I shal kenne[14] hire sulke a lore
Þat hoe shal lovien þe mikel more
   Þen ani mon in londe.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Al so hav I Godes griþ,[15]
Wel havest þou said, Dame Siriþ,
   And goderhele shal ben þin.

1 conceal (it)
2 try
3 ecclesiastical court
4 such
5 sumpter-driven (slung on a pack-animal)?
6 by
7 according to
8 agreement
9 mayst
10 this opportunity
11 needest (= þar, from OE. *þearf*)
12 sigh
13 for good fortune
14 make known, teach
15 peace

Have her twenti shiling:
Þis Ich ȝeve þe to meding,[1]
To buggen[2] þe sep[3] and swin.'

[*Sirith*] 'So Ich evere brouke[4] hous oþer flet,[5]
Neren never penes[6] beter biset
Þen þes shulen ben.
For I shal don a juperti,[7]
And a ferli[8] maistri[9];
Þat þou shalt ful wel sen.—

[*To her dog*] Pepir[10] nou shalt þou ete,[11]
Þis mustart shal ben þi mete,
And gar[12] þin eien to renne[13];
I shal make a lesing
Of þin heie-renning,
Ich wot wel wer and wenne.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Wat! nou const þou no god?
Me þinkeþ þat þou art wod.
Ȝevest þo þe welpe[14] mustard?'

[*Sirith*] 'Be stille, boinard[15]!
I shal mit[16] þis ilke gin[17]
Gar hire love to ben al þin.
Ne shal ich never have reste ne ro[18]
Til ich have told hou þou shalt do.
Abid me her til min hom-come.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Ȝus,[19] bi þe somer blome,[20]
Heþen[21] null I ben binomen,[22]
Til þou be aȝein comen.'

1 reward
2 buy
3 sheep
4 enjoy
5 hall (*lit.* floor)
6 pence
7 venture
8 wondrous
9 trick
10 MS. pepis
11 MS. eten
12 make
13 run; MS. rene
14 whelp
15 fool
16 with
17 contrivance
18 quiet
19 yes
20 bloom
21 hence
22 taken away

Dame Siriþ bigon to go
As a wrecche þat is wo,
Þat[1] hoe come hire to þen inne[2]
Þer þis gode wif wes inne.
Þo hoe to þe dore com,
Swiþe reuliche[3] hoe bigon:

[*Sirith*] 'Loverd,' hoe seiþ, 'wo is holde[4] wives,
Þat in poverte ledeþ ay [hore][5] lives;
Not[6] no mon so muchel of pine
As poure wif þat falleþ in ansine[7];
Þat mai ilke mon bi me wite,
For mai I nouþer gange ne site;
Ded wold I ben ful fain.
Hounger and þurst me haveþ nei slain;
Ich ne mai mine limes onwold,[8]
For mikel hounger and þurst and cold.
Warto liveth selke a wrecche?
Wi nul[9] Goed mi soule fecche?'

[*Margeri*] 'Seli[10] wif, God þe hounbinde[11]!
To dai wille I þe mete finde,
For love of Goed.
Ich have reuþe of þi wo,
For evele icloþed I se þe go,
And evele ishoed;

Com herin, Ich wile þe fede.'

[*Sirith*] 'Goed almiȝtten do þe mede,
And þe Loverd þat wes on rode idon,[12]
And faste fourti daus[13] to non,[14]
And hevene and erþe haveþ to welde,
As þilke Loverd þe forȝelde.[15]'

[1] until
[2] dwelling
[3] piteously
[4] old
[5] See 149 24
[6] knows not
[7] want
[8] control
[9] will not
[10] good
[11] unbind, pardon
[12] destroyed
[13] days
[14] noon
[15] requite

[*Margeri*] 'Have her fles[1] and eke bred,
And make þe glad, hit is mi red[2];
And have her þe coppe wiþ þe drinke;
Goed do þe mede for þi swinke.'

Þenne spac þat holde wif—
Crist awarie[3] hire lif!—
[*Sirith*] 'Alas! alas! þat ever I live!
Al þe sunne Ich wolde forgive
Þe mon þat smite of[4] min heved!
Ich wolde mi lif me were bireved!'

[*Margeri*] 'Seli wif, what eilleþ þe?'

[*Sirith*] 'Bote eþe[5] mai I sori be:
Ich hevede a douter feir and fre,[6]
Feiror ne miȝtte no mon se.
Hoe hevede a curteis hossebonde,
Freour[7] mon miȝtte no mon fonde.[8]
Mi douter lovede him al to wel;
Forþi[9] mak I sori del.[10]
Oppon a dai he was out wend,
And þarþoru[11] wes mi douter shend.
He hede on ernde out of toune;
And com a modi[12] clarc wiþ croune,[13]
To mi douter his love beed,
And hoe nolde nout folewe his red.
He ne miȝtte his wille have,
For no þing he miȝtte crave;
Þenne bigon þe clerc to wiche,[14]
And shop[15] mi douter til a biche.
Þis is mi douter þat Ich of speke;

1 flesh, meat
2 advice
3 curse
4 off
5 easily
6 noble
7 nobler
8 search out
9 on this account
10 lament
11 by this means, thereby
12 proud
13 tonsure
14 use witchcraft
15 transformed (shaped)

For del of hire min herte breke.
Loke hou hire heien greten,[1]
On hire cheken þe teres meten.[2]
Forþi, dame, were hit no wonder,
Þau min herte burste assunder.
A[nd] wose ever is ȝong houssewif,
Ha[3] loveþ ful luitel hire lif,
And[4] eni clerc of love hire bede,
Bote[5] hoe grante, and lete him spede.'

[*Margeri*] 'A, Loverd Crist! wat mai [I] þenne do?
Þis enderdai[6] com a clarc me to,
And bed[7] me love on his manere,
And Ich him nolde nout ihere.
Ich trouue he wolle me forsape.[8]
Hou troustu,[9] nelde, Ich moue ascape?'

[*Sirith*] 'God almiȝtten be þin help
Þat þou ne be nouþer bicche ne welp!
Leve dame, if eni clerc
Bedeþ þe þat love-werc,
Ich rede þat þou grante his bone,[10]
And bicom his lefmon sone.
And if þat þou so ne dost,
A worse red þou ounderfost.[11]'

[*Margeri*] 'Loverd Crist, þat me is wo,
Þat þe clarc me hede[12] fro
Ar he me hevede biwonne!
Me were levere þen ani fe[13]
That he hevede enes[14] leien bi me,
And efftsones[15] bigunne.

[1] shed tears
[2] meet
[3] she
[4] if
[5] unless
[6] the other day
[7] offered
[8] transform
[9] thinkest thou, believest thou
[10] request (boon)
[11] receivest, takest
[12] went
[13] property
[14] once
[15] again

8. of: the verb takes the genitive of the thing besought in OE.

Evermore, nelde, ich wille be þin,
Wiþ þat[1] þou feche me Willekin,
Þe clarc of wam I telle;
Giftes will I geve þe
Þat þou maiȝt ever þe betere be,
Bi Godes houne belle!'

[*Sirith*] 'Soþliche, mi swete dame,
And if I mai wiþhoute blame,
Fain Ich wille ffonde;
And if Ich mai wiþ him mete
Bi eni wei oþer bi strete,
Nout ne will I wonde.[2]

Have god dai, dame! forþ will I go.'
[*Margeri*] 'Allegate[3] loke þat þou do so
As Ich þe bad;
Bote þat þou me Wilekin bringe,
Ne mai [I] never lawe[4] ne singe,
Ne be glad.'

[*Sirith*] 'Iwis, dame, if I mai,
Ich wille bringen him ȝet to-dai,
Bi mine miȝtte.'
Hoe wente hire to hire inne,
Her hoe founde Wilekinne,
Bi houre Driȝtte[5]!

[*Sirith*] 'Swete Wilekin, be þou nout dred,
For of þin her[n]de Ich have wel sped.
Swiþe com for[þ] þider wiþ me,
For hoe haveþ send affter þe;

[1] provided that
[2] hesitate
[3] in every way, by all means
[4] laugh
[5] our Lord

6 belle: sacring bell, used in the mass; see *Seven Sages* (Percy Soc. 16), l. 2285: 'By Goddis belle.'

Iwis nou maiʒt þou ben above,
For þou havest grantise[1] of hire love.'

[*Wilekin*] 'God þe forʒelde, leve nelde,
Þat hevene and erþe haveþ to welde!'

Þis modi mon bigon to gon
Wiþ Siriþ[2] to his levemon
In þilke stounde.[3]
Dame Siriþ[2] bigon to telle,
And swor bi Godes ouene belle,
Hoe hevede him founde.

[*Sirith*] 'Dame, so have ich Wilekin sout,
For nou have Ich him ibrout.'

[*Margeri*] 'Welcome, Wilekin, swete þing,
Þou art welcomore þen þe king.

Wilekin þe swete,
Mi love I þe bihete,
To don al þine wille.
Turnd Ich have mi þout,
For I ne wolde nout
Þat þou þe shuldest spille.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Dame, so Ich evere bide noen,[4]
And Ich am redi and iboen[5]
To don al þat þou saie.
Nelde, par ma fai![6]
Þou most gange awai,
Wile Ich and hoe shulen plaie.' . . .[7]

grant
MS. Siriz
moment

[4] noon
[5] ready, prepared
[6] by my faith

[7] One stanza omitted

[*Sirith*] 'And wose is onwis,
And for non pris
Ne con geten his levemon,
I shal, for mi mede,
Garen him to spede,
For ful wel I con.'

ROBIN HOOD AND THE MONK

This poem, though unmistakably a ballad, tells a story, and is therefore here classed as a tale, though perhaps it has nearly equal claim to be called a romance. It is one of the few ballads of whose early date we are assured, the manuscript being of about 1450. It is No. 119 of Child's great collection (3.94–101); see also Sargent and Kittredge's edition in one volume, pp. 282–6. I omit stanzas 30–8, 53–66, both inclusive, and the end, stanzas 83–90. There is an unfortunate break after the first two lines of stanza 30, due to the loss of a sheet of the manuscript.

What Gummere says of ballads in general (*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 2.474; the whole chapter should be read) is true of this in particular: 'They give a hint of primitive and unspoiled poetic sensation. . . . They can tell a good tale. They are fresh with the open air; wind and sunshine play through them.' For myself, I may add that the two opening stanzas of this ballad seem to me of peculiar loveliness.

In somer, when þe shawes[1] be sheyne,[2]
And leves be large and long,
Hit is full mery in feyre foreste
To here þe foulys song;

To se þe dere draw to þe dale,
And leve þe hilles hee,
And shadow hem in þe leves grene,
Under the grenewode tre.

Hit befel on Whitsontide,
Erly in a May mornyng,
The son up feyre can[3] shyne,
And the briddis mery can syng.

[1] thickets, groves [2] beautiful

'This is a mery mornyng,' seid Litull John,
'Be hym þat dyed on tre;
A more mery man þen I am one
Lyves not in Cristiante.[1]

Pluk up þi hert, my dere mayster,'
Litull John can sey,
'And thynk hit is a full fayre tyme
In a mornyng of May.'

'Ȝe,[2] on thyng greves me,' seid Robyn,
'And does my hert mych woo;
Þat I may not no solem day
To mas nor matyns goo.

Hit is a fourtnet and more,' seid he,
'Syn I my Savyour[3] see;
To-day wil I to Notyngham,' seid Robyn,
'With þe myght of mylde Marye.'

Than spake Moche,[4] þe mylner[5] sun —
Ever more wel hym betyde!
'Take twelve of þi wyght[6] ȝemen,[7]
Well weppynd, be þi side.
Such on wolde þiselfe slon,
Þat twelve dar not abyde.[8]'

'Of all my mery men,' seid Robyn,
'Be my feith I wil non have,
But Litull John shall beyre my bow,
Til þat me list to drawe.'

[1] Christendom
[2] yea
[3] consecrated wafer or host
[4] Much
[5] miller's
[6] sturdy
[7] yeomen
[8] withstand

'Þou shall beyre þin own,' seid Litull Jo[h]n,
'Maister, and I wyl beyre myne,
And we well shete a peny,[1]' seid Litull Jo[h]n
'Under þe grenewode lyne.[2]'

'I wil not shete a peny,' seyd Robyn Hode,
'In feith, Litull John, with the,
But ever for on as[3] þou shetis,' seide Robyn,
'In feith I holde þe thre.'

Thus shet þei forth, þese ȝemen too,
Bothe at buske[4] and brome,[5]
Til Litull John wan of his maister
Five shillings to[6] hose and shone.

A ferly[7] strife fel þem betwene,
As they went bi the wey;
Litull John seid he had won five shillings,
And Robyn Hode seid schortly, 'Nay.'

With þat Robyn Hode lyed[8] Litul Jo[h]n,
And smote hym with his hande;
Litul Jo[h]n waxed wroth þerwith,
And pulled out his bright bronde.

'Were þou not my maister,' seid Litull John,
'Þou shuldis by[9] hit ful sore;
Get þe a man wher þou w[ilt],
For þou getis me no more.'

Þen Robyn goes to Notyngham,
Hymselfe mornyng[10] allone,
And Litull John to mery Scherwode —
The pathes he knew ilkone.

[1] shoot for a penny
[2] lime, linden
[3] that
[4] bush
[5] broom
[6] for
[7] fierce
[8] gave the lie to

Whan Robyn came to Notyngham,
  Sertenly withouten layn,[1]
He prayed to God and myld Mary
  To bryng hym out save[2] agayn.

He gos into Seynt Mary chirch,
  And kneled down before the rode[3];
Alle þat ever were þe church within
  Beheld wel Robyn Hode.

Beside hym stod a gret-hedid munke,
  I pray to God woo he be!
Fful sone he knew gode Robyn,
  As sone as he hym se.

Out at þe durre he ran,
  Fful sone and anon;
Alle þe ȝatis of Notyngham
  He made to be sparred everychon.

'Rise up,' he seid, 'þou prowde schereff,
  Buske[4] þe and make þe bowne[5];
I have spyed þe kynggis felon,
  Fforsothe he is in þis town.

I have spyed þe false felon,
  As he stondis at his masse;
Hit is long of[6] þe,' seide þe munke,
  'And[7] ever he fro us passe.

Þis traytur name is Robyn Hode,
  Under þe grenewode lynde[8];
He robbyt me onys of a hundred pound,
  Hit shalle never out of my mynde.'

[1] lying
[2] safe
[3] cross
[4] prepare
[5] ready
[6] through, by means of
[7] if
[8] linden

Up þen rose þis prowde shereff,
And radly[1] made hym ȝare[2];
Many was þe moder son
To þe kyrk with hym can fare.

In at þe durres þei throly[3] thrast,[4]
With staves ful gode wone[5];
'Alas, alas!' seid Robyn Hode,
'Now mysse I Litull John.'

But Robyn toke out a too-hond sworde,
Þat hangit down be his kne;
Þer as þe schereff and his men stode thyckust,
Theþurwarde wolde he.

Thryes thorowout þem he ran þen,
Forsoþe, as I yow sey,
And woundyt mony a moder son,
And twelve he slew þat day.

His sworde upon þe schireff hed
Sertanly he brake in too;
'Þe smyth þat þe made,' seid Robyn,
'I pray God[6] wyrke hym woo!

Ffor now am I weppynlesse,' seid Robyn,
'Alasse! agayn my wylle;
But-if I may fle þese traytors fro,
I wot þei wil me kyll.'

There is a break in the manuscript two lines after this point, but it is evident from what follows that Robin Hood's men in some way learn of his capture. All of them are utterly distracted by this news save Little John, who feels sure that 'our Lady' will care for her servant. He himself will see to the monk.

1 quickly
2 ready
3 stoutly
4 thrust
5 number
6 MS. to God

Litul John stode at a wyndow in þe mornyng,
And lokid forþ at a stage;
He was war wher þe munke came ridying,
And with hym a litul page.

'Be my feith,' seid Litul John to Moch,
'I can þe tel tithyngus[1] gode;
I se wher þe munke cumys rydyng,
I know hym be his wyde hode.'

They went into the way, þese ȝemen boþe,
As curtes men and hende;
Þei spyrred[2] tithyngus at þe munke,
As they hade bene his frende.

Ffro whens come ȝe?' seid Litull Jo[h]n,
'Tel us tithyngus, I yow pray,
Off a false owtlay, [callid Robyn Hode,]
Was takyn ȝisterday.

He robbyt me and my felowes boþe
Of twenti marke in sertayn[3];
If þat false owtlay be takyn,
Fforsoþe we wolde be fayn.'

'So did he me,' seid þe munke,
'Of a hundred pound and more;
I layde furst hande hym apon,
Ȝe may thonke me þerfore.'

'I pray God thanke you,' seid Litull John,
'And we wil when we may;
We wil go with you, with your leve,
And bryng yow on your way.

[1] tidings [2] asked [3] MS. serten

Ffor Robyn Hode hase many a wilde felow,
I tell you in certayn[1];
If þei wist ȝe rode þis way,
In feith ȝe shulde be slayn.'

As þei went talking be þe way,
The munke and Litull John,
John toke þe munkis horse be þe hede
Fful sone and anon.

John[2] toke þe munkis horse be þe hed
Fforsoþe, as I yow say;
So did Much, þe litull page,
Ffor[3] he shulde not scape away.

Be þe golett[4] of þe hode
John pulled þe munke down;
John was nothyng of hym agast—
He lete hym falle on his crown.

Litull John was so[re] agrevyd,
And drew owt his swerde in hye[5];
This munke saw he shulde be ded,
Lowd 'mercy!' can[6] he crye.

'He was my maister,' seid Litull John
'Þat þou hase browȝt in bale[7];
Shalle þou never cum at our kyng,
Ffor to telle hym tale.'

John smote of þe munkis hed,
No longer wolde he dwell[8];
So did Moch þe litull page,
Ffor ferd[9] lest he wolde tell. . . .

[1] MS. certen
[2] MS. Johne
[3] that
[4] throat
[5] haste
[6] did

Little John and Much then carry to the king the letters taken from the monk's body, conveying the tidings of Robin's capture. The king rejoices at this news, gives the men twenty pounds as a reward, and makes them yeomen of the crown. He then bids Little John bear his privy seal to the sheriff of *Nottingham*, commanding that Robin Hood be brought to him, alive and uninjured.

The scheref made John gode chere,
 And gaf hym wyne of the best;
At nyȝt þei went to her bedde,
 And every man to his rest.

When þe scheref was on slepe,[1]
 Dronken of wyne and ale,
Litul John and Moch, forsoþe,
 Toke þe way unto þe jale.

Litul John callid up þe jayler,
 And bade hym rise anon;
He seyd Robyn Hode had brokyn prison,
 And out of hit was gon.

The porter rose anon, sertan,
 As sone as he herd John calle;
Litul John was redy with a swerd,
 And bare hym to þe walle.

'Now wil I be porter,' seid Litul John,
 'And take þe keyes in honde';
He toke þe way to Robyn Hode,
 And sone he hym unbonde.

He gaf hym a gode swerd in his hond,
 His hed with for to kepe,[2]
And ther as þe walle was lowyst
 Anon down can þei lepe.

1 asleep 2 to defend his head with

Be þat þe cok began to crow,
The day began to spryng,
The scheref fond þe jaylier ded,
The comyn bell made he ryng.

He made a crye thoroout al þe tow[n],
Wheder he be ȝoman or knave
Þat cowþe bryng hym Robyn Hode,
His warison[1] he shuld have.

'Ffor I dar never,' said þe scheref,
'Cum before oure kyng;
Ffor if I do, I wot serten
Fforsoþe he wil me heng.'

The scheref made to seke Notyngham,
Bothe be strete and stye,[2]
And Robyn was in mery Scherwode,
As liȝt as lef on lynde.

Then bespake gode Litull John,
To Robyn Hode can he say:
'I have done þe a gode turne for an e
Quyte þe[3] whan þou may.

'I have done þe a gode turne,' seid Lit
'Fforsothe, as I yow say;
I have brouȝt þe under grenewode lyn
Ffarewel, and have gode day.'

'Nay, be my trouth,' seid Robyn Hod
'So shall hit neuer be;
I make þe maister,' seid Robyn Hode,
'Off alle my men and me.'

[1] reward [2] lane

'Nay, be my trouth,' seid Litull John,
  'So shalle hit never be;
But lat me be a felow,[1]' seid Litull John,
  'No noder kepe I be.[2]'

Thus John gate Robyn Hod[e] out of prison,
  Sertan withoutyn layn[3];
Whan his men saw hym hol and sounde,
  Fforsothe they were full fayne.

They filled in wyne, and made hem glad,
  Under þe levys smale,
And ȝete[4] pastes of venyson,
  Þat gode was with ale.

Eight stanzas remain. Word of the escape is carried to the king, who declares that, though Little John has beguiled both the sheriff and himself, he has been true to Robin Hood.

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

This is the poem from which Longfellow drew the Sicilian's tale, in the first series of his *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. Leigh Hunt related the story in prose in his *Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla* (1848); a play was founded on it in the reign of Henry VII, and acted at Chester in 1529 (Ward, *Hist. Eng. Dram. Lit.* 1.93–4; Collier, *Hist. Eng. Dram. Poetry*, London, 1831, 1.113–5; 2.128, 415; Hazlitt, *Rem. Early Pop. Poetry*, London, 1864, 1.264–88); and Rudolf Schmidt drew from it his drama, *Den Forvandlede Konge*, which appeared in 1876, and was several times played at Copenhagen. Closely allied to our Middle English poem is Jean de Condé's (fl. 1310–1340) *Li Dis dou Magnificat* (*Dits et Contes de Baudouin de Condé et de son Fils, Jean de Condé*, ed. Scheler, Brussels, 1866, 2.355–70, 455 ff.). The former, however, has been influenced by the romance of *Robert the Devil* (cf. Varnhagen, *Longfellow's Tales of a Wayside Inn*, Berlin, 1884, pp. 43–7), from which the king's name, Robert, may come, together with certain traits of his life as fool; Robert the Devil, like the king, reaches Rome on Maundy Thursday.

The tale appears in numerous versions, European and Asiatic. One set of the European versions derives from the story of Jovinian in the *Gesta Romanorum*. Much earlier is the Jewish legend, which occurs in four versions (Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, Kabbala, etc.), one of which connects the story

[1] comrade   [2] no other I care to be   [3] dissembling   [4] ate

with Jer. 9. 23, instead of with the Magnificat. On the Hebrew are founded a Arabic and a Turkish version, and the former, in turn, may have been influ enced by the Hindoo belief in metempsychosis (see Varnhagen, *op. cit.*, an his *Ein Indisches Märchen auf seiner Wanderung*, Berlin, 1882).

Our text (lines 90–199, 383–416) is taken from Horstmann, *Sammlun Altenglischer Legenden* (Heilbronn, 1878). The poem must be earlier tha 1370, the approximate date of the Vernon manuscript.

The first part of the poem may be summarized as follows: King Robert c Sicily was brother to Pope Urban and Emperor Valmond (not historical), an was proud to think that he had no equal. On Midsummer Night (June 24) h went to vespers, and heard a verse of the Magnificat — *Deposuit potentes d sede, et exaltavit humiles* — which he made a clerk translate to him, and the scoffed at it. In church he fell asleep, and when vespers were over was le there alone, his place with the court being taken by an angel who assumed h appearance. At length the king wakes, cries out for his men, and is roughl accosted by the sexton, who, finally, thinking him to be mad, opens th church-door.

Þe kyng bigan to renne out faste;
As a man þat was wod
At his paleys-ȝate he stod,
And het þe porter gadelyng,[1]
And bad him come in hiȝyng,[2]
Anon þe ȝates up[3] to do.
Þe porter seide: 'Ho[4] clepeþ[5] so?'
He answered riȝt anon:
'Þou schalt witen,[6] ar I gon:
Þi lord I am, þou schalt knowe;
In prison þou schalt ligge[7] lowe,
And ben honged and todrawe[8]
As a traytur, bi þe lawe;
Þou schalt wel wite I am kyng.
Opene þe ȝates, gadelyng!'
Þe porter seide: 'So mot[9] I þe,[10]
Þe kyng is mid his meyne[11];
Wel I wot, wiþoute doute,
Þe kyng nis nouȝt[12] now wiþoute.'

[1] knave
[2] haste
[3] open
[5] calleth
[6] know
[7] lie
[9] ma
[10] thr
[11] co

Þe porter com into halle,
Bifore þe newe kyng a[1] knes gan falle,
And seide: 'Þer is atte[2] ȝate
A nyce[3] fol, ycome late;
He seiþ he is lord and kyng,
And cleped me foule gadelyng.
Lord, what wile ȝe þat I do —
Lete him in, or lete him go?'
Þe angel seide in haste:
'Do him come in swiþe[4] faste;
For mi fol I wile him make,
Forte[5] he þe name of kyng forsake.'
  Þe porter com to þe ȝate,
And him called in — to late:
He smot þe porter whan he com in,
Þat blod brast out of mouþ and chin.
Þe porter ȝeld[6] him his travayle —
Him smot aȝen, wiþouten fayle,
Þat nese and mouþ brast a[7] blod.
Þanne he[8] semed almost wod.
Þe porter and his men in haste
Kyng Roberd in a podel[9] caste,
Unsemely made his bodi þan,
Þat he nas lik non oþer man,
And brouȝt him bifore þe newe kyng,
And seide: 'Lord, þis gadelyng
Me haþ smite wiþoute desert;
He seiþ he is oure kyng apert[10];
Þis harlot[11] ouȝte for his sawe[12]
Ben yhonged and todrawe,
For he seiþ non oþer word
Bote þat he is boþe kyng and lord.'

1 on
2 at the
3 silly
4 full
5 until
6 requited
7 with
8 King Robert
9 puddle
10 clearly
11 rascal
12 saying

Þe angel seide to Kyng Robe
'Þou art a fol, þat art nouȝt fer
Mi men to do such vileynye;
Þi gult þou most nede abye.[2]
What art þou?' seide þe angel.
Quaþ Roberd: 'Þou schalt wite wel:
I am kyng, and kyng wil be;
Wiþ wronge[3] þou hast mi dignite.
Þe Pope of Rome is mi broþer,
And þe Emperour min oþer;
Þei wil me wreke,[4] forsoþ to telle,
I wot þei nille nouȝt longe dwelle.[5]'
'Þou art mi fol,' seide þe angel;
'Þou schalt be schore[6] everichdel[7]
Lich a fol, a fol to be —
Wher is now þi dignite?
Þi counseyler schal ben an ape,
And o[8] cloþyng ȝou[9] worþ[10] yschape[11]
I schal him cloþen as þi broþer,
Of o cloþyng — hit nis non oþer;
He schal be þin owne fere[12] —
Sum wit of him þou miȝt lere.
Houndes, howso hit falle,[13]
Schulen ete wiþ þe in halle;
Þou schalt eten on þe ground;
Þin assayour[14] schal ben an hound,
To assaye þi mete bifore þe —
Wher is now þi dignite?'
He het a barbur him bifore,
Þat as a fol he schulde be schore
Al around lich a frere,[15]
An hondebrede bove eiþer ere,

1 afraid
2 expiate
3 wrongfully
4 avenge
5 tarry
6 shorn
7 in every respect
8 one, the same
9 for you both
10 shall be

And on his croune make a crois.
He gan crie and make nois:
He swor þei schulde alle abye
Þat him dude such vileynye,
And ever he seide he was lord;
And eche man scorned him for þat word,
And eche man seide he was wod —
Þat proved wel he couþe no good.
For he wende in none wise
Þat God almiȝti couþe devise
Him to bringe to lower stat;
Wiþ o drauȝt[1] he was chekmat.
Wiþ houndes everich niȝt he lay,
And ofte he cried welaway
Þat he ever was ybore,
For he was a man forlore.
Þer nas in court grom ne page
Þat of þe kyng ne made rage,[2]
For no man ne miȝte him knowe:
He was defigured in a þrowe.[3]
 So lowe er þat was never kyng;
Allas, her was a delful[4] þing —
Þat him[5] scholde, for his pride,
Such hap among his men bitide!
Hunger and þurst he hadde grete,[6]
For he ne moste[7] no mete ete,
Bote houndes eten of his disch.

The story continues thus: The new king gave Sicily an angelic government for more than three years — almost four, it would seem. At length — in April it was — he received a letter from Valmond, inviting him to Rome for Maundy Thursday. Thither the king went, and in his train the fool, the latter in a garment decorated with fox-tails, the angel in white samite set with pearls, and on a white steed. The deposed Robert appeals to his brothers in

[1] move
[2] sport
[3] trice
[4] doleful
[5] MS. he
[6] great
[7] might, was allowed

vain, and thereupon thinks of Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes, and how their pride was brought low. With this he pours out his heart in prayer: 'Lord, on thy fool have thou pity!' At the end of five weeks the king returns to Sicily.

Þe angel com to Cisyle,
He and his men, in a while;
Whan he com into halle,
Þe fol he bad forþ calle.
He seide: 'Fol, artow kyng?'
'Nay, sire,' quaþ he, 'wiþoute lesyng.
'What artow?' seide þe angel.
'Sire, a fol, þat wot I wel,
And more þan fol, ȝif hit may be:
Kep[2] I non oþer dignite.'
Þe angel into chaumbre went;
After þe fol anon he sent;
He bad his men out of chaumbre gon
Þer lefte[3] no mo but he alon,
And þe fol þat stod him bi.
To him he seide: 'Þou hast merci.
Þenk þou were lowe pult,[4]
And al was for þin owne gult:
A fol þou were to hevene Kyng,
Þerfore þou art an underlyng.
God haþ forȝive þi mysdede;
Ever herafter þou him drede!
I am an angel of renoun,
Sent to kepe þi regioun.
More joye me schal falle
In hevene among mi feren[5] alle
In an oure of a day
Þan in erþe, I þe say,
In an hundred þousend ȝer,
Þeiȝ al þe world fer and ner

[1] falsehood
[2] hold
[3] remained
[4] placed

Were min at mi likyng.
I am an angel, þou art kyng.'
 He went in twynklyng of an eȝe.
No more of him þer nas seȝe.[1]

CHAUCER, CLERK'S TALE: THE STORY OF GRISELDA

See the general references on Chaucer at the close of the introductory note to *Sir Thopas*, p. 108.

Ther is at the west syde of Itaille,
Doun at the rote of Vesulus[2] the colde,
A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,
Wher many a tour and toun thou mayst biholde,
That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,
And many another delitable sighte;
And Saluces[3] this noble contree highte.

A markis whylom lord was of that londe,
As were his worthy eldres him bifore;
And obeisant and redy to his honde
Were alle his liges,[4] bothe lasse and more.
Thus in delyt he liveth, and hath don yore,[5]
Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,
Bothe of his lordes and of his commune.[6]

Therwith he was, to speke as of linage,
The gentilleste yborn of Lumbardye,
A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,
And ful of honour and of curteisye;
Discreet ynogh his contree for to gye[7] —
Save in somme thinges that he was to blame —
And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

Lines 22–105 are here omitted. Walter's subjects urge him to marry, and he promises, conditionally, to do so. The next selection includes lines 106–19.

[1] seen
[2] Monte Viso
[3] Saluzzo, southwest of Turin
[4] vassals
[5] for a long time
[6] common people, commons
[7] guide, rule

'Lat me alone in chesinge of my wyf,
That charge upon my bak I wol endure;
But I yow preye, and charge upon your lyf,
That what wyf that I take, ye me assure
To worshipe hir, whyl that hir lyf may dure,
In word and werk, bothe here and everywhere,
As she an emperoures doghter were.

And forthermore, this shal ye swere, that ye
Agayn[1] my choys shul neither grucche[2] ne stry
For sith I shal forgoon my libertee
At your requeste, as ever moot I thryve,
Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve;
And but ye wole assente in swich manere,
I prey yow, speketh namore of this matere.'

Lines 120–40 are here omitted. Walter names the wedding-day, : the wedding-feast. The next selection includes lines 141–343.

Noght fer fro thilke paleys honurable,
Ther as this markis shoop[3] his mariage,
Ther stood a throp,[4] of site delitable,[5]
In which that povre folk of that village
Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,[6]
And of hir labour took hir sustenance,
After that th'erthe yaf hem habundance.

Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a man
Which that was holden povrest of hem alle
(But hye God som tyme senden can
His grace into a litel oxes stalle);
Janicula men of that throp him calle.
A doghter hadde he, fair ynogh to sighte,
And Grisildis this yonge mayden highte.

[1] against
[2] murmur, grumble
[3] prepared for, planned
[4] thorp, small village

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
Than was she oon the faireste under sonne;
For povreliche yfostred up was she,
No likerous[1] lust was thurgh hir herte yronne
Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne[2]
She drank, and, for she wolde vertu plese,
She knew wel labour, but non ydel ese.

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,
Yet in the brest of hir virginitee
Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage[3];
And in greet reverence and charitee
Hir olde povre fader fostred she;
A fewe sheep, spinning, on feeld she kepte,
She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte.

And whan she hoomward cam, she wolde bringe
Wortes[4] or othere herbes, tymes ofte,
The whiche she shredde and seeth[5] for hir livinge,
And made hir bed ful harde, and nothing softe;
And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf onlofte[6]
With everich obeisaunce and diligence
That child may doon to fadres reverence.

Upon Grisilde, this povre creature,
Ful ofte sythe this markis sette his yë,
As he on hunting rood paraventure[7];
And whan it fil that he mighte hir espye,
He noght with wantoun loking of folye
His yën caste on hir, but in sad wyse
Upon hir chere[8] he wolde him ofte avyse,[9]

Commending in his herte hir wommanhede,
And eek hir vertu, passing any wight
Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.

1 wanton
2 tun, cask
3 serious disposition
4 herbs
5 boiled
6 aloft (kept aloft = sustained)
7 by chance
8 face, countenance
9 take thought

For though the peple have no greet insight
In vertu, he considered ful right
Hir bountee, and disposed[1] that he wolde
Wedde hir only, if ever he wedde sholde.

The day of wedding cam, but no wight can
Telle what womman that it sholde be;
For which merveille wondred many a man,
And seyden, whan they were in privetee:
'Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee?
Wol he nat wedde? allas, allas the whyle!
Why wol he thus himself and us bigyle?'

But natheles this markis hath don make[2]
Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,
Broches and ringes, for Grisildis sake,
And of hir clothing took he the mesure
By a mayde, lyk to hir [as of[3]] stature,
And eek of othere ornamentes alle
That unto swich a wedding sholde falle.

The tyme of undern[4] of the same day
Approcheth, that this wedding sholde be;
And al the paleys put was in array,
Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree;
Houses of office[5] stuffed with plentee,
Ther maystow seen, of deyntevous[6] vitaille,[7]
That may be founde as fer as last[8] Itaille.

This royal markis, richely arrayed,
Lordes and ladyes in his companye,
The whiche unto the feste were yprayed,
And of his retenue the bachelrye,[9]
With many a soun of sondry melodye,

[1] planned
[2] had made
[3] in respect to
[4] about 9 A.M.
[5] servants' offices
[6] dainty
[7] food
[8] farthest (p
[9] company c

Unto the village, of the which I tolde,
In this array the righte wey han holde.

Grisilde of this, God woot, ful innocent
That for hir shapen was al this array,
To fecchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh hoom as sone as ever she may;
For wel she hadde herd seyd that thilke day
The markis sholde wedde, and, if she mighte,
She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte.

She thoghte: 'I wol with othere maydens stonde
That been my felawes, in our dore, and see
The markisesse, and therfor wol I fonde[1]
To doon at hoom, as sone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth unto me;
And than I may at leyser hir biholde,
If she this wey unto the castel holde.'

And as she wolde over hir threshfold goon,
The markis cam and gan hir for to calle;
And she set doun hir water-pot anoon
Bisyde the threshfold, in an oxes stalle,
And doun upon hir knees she gan to falle,
And with sad contenance kneleth stille,
Til she had herd what was the lordes wille.

This thoghtful markis spak unto this mayde
Ful sobrely, and seyde in this manere:
'Wher is your fader, Grisildis?' he sayde.
And she with reverence, in humble chere,
Answerde: 'Lord, he is al redy here.'
And in she gooth withouten lenger lette,
And to the markis she hir fader fette.

1 try, endeavor

He by the hond than took this olde man,
And seyde thus, whan he him hadde asyde:
'Janicula, I neither may ne can
Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde;
If that thou vouchesauf, whatso bityde,
Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,[1]
As for my wyf, unto hir lyves ende.

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,
And art my feithful lige man ybore;
And al that lyketh[2] me, I dar wel seyn
It lyketh thee, and specially therfore
Tel me that poynt that I have seyd bifore—
If that thou wolt unto that purpos drawe
To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe?'

This sodeyn cas[3] this man astoned so
That reed he wex, abayst,[4] and al quaking
He stood; unnethes seyde he wordes mo,
But only thus: 'Lord,' quod he, 'my willing
Is as ye wole, ne ayeines your lyking
I wol nothing; ye be my lord so dere;
Right as yow lust governeth[5] this matere.'

'Yet wol I,' quod this markis softely,
'That in thy chambre I and thou and she
Have a collacion,[6] and wostow why?
For I wol axe if it hir wille be
To be my wyf, and reule hir after me;
And al this shal be doon in thy presence—
I wol noght speke out of thyn audience.'

And in the chambre whyl they were aboute
Hir tretis,[7] which as ye shal after here,
The peple cam unto the hous withoute,

[1] go
[2] pleaseth
[3] happening
[4] abashed, disconcerted
[5] arrange (imp. plur.)
[6] conference
[7] trea

And wondred hem in how honest[1] manere
And tentifly[2] she kepte hir fader dere.
But outerly[3] Grisildis wondre mighte,
For never erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned
To seen so greet a gest come in that place;
She never was to swiche gestes woned,[4]
For which she loked with ful pale face.
But shortly forth this tale for to chace,
Thise arn the wordes that the markis sayde
To this benigne verray feithful mayde.

'Grisilde,' he seyde, 'ye shul wel understonde
It lyketh to your fader and to me
That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde,
As I suppose ye wol that it so be.
But thise demandes axe I first,' quod he,
'That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,
Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse[5]?

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte
To al my lust, and that I frely may,
As me best thinketh, do yow[6] laughe or smerte,
And never ye to grucche it, night ne day?
And eek whan I sey "ye," ne[7] sey nat "nay,"
Neither by word ne frowning contenance;
Swer this, and here I swere our alliance.'

Wondring upon this word, quaking for drede,
She seyde: 'Lord, undigne[8] and unworthy
Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede,[9]
But as ye wol yourself, right so wol I;
And heer I swere that never willingly

[1] creditable, decent
[2] attentively, carefully
[3] utterly
[4] accustomed
[5] consider the matter (=refuse)
[6] cause you to
[7] So MS. *read*; ye (?)
[8] undeserving
[9] offer

In werk ne thoght I nil yow disobeye,
For to be[1] deed, though me were looth to deye.'

'This is ynogh, Grisilde myn!' quod he.
And forth he gooth with a ful sobre chere
Out at the dore, and after that cam she.
And to the peple he seyde in this manere:
'This is my wyf,' quod he, 'that standeth here
Honoureth hir and loveth hir, I preye.
Whoso me loveth; ther is namore to seye.'

And for that nothing of hir olde gere[2]
She sholde bringe into his hous, he bad
That wommen sholde dispoilen hir right there;
Of which thise ladyës were nat right glad
To handle hir clothes wherin she was clad.
But natheles this mayde, bright of hewe,
Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe.

Hir heres han they kembd, that lay untressed
Ful rudely, and with hir[3] fingres smale
A corone on hir heed they han ydressed,[4]
And sette hir ful of nowches[5] grete and smale
Of hir array what sholde I make a tale?
Unnethe[6] the peple hir knew for hir fairnesse,
Whan she translated was in swich richesse.

This markis hath hir spoused with a ring
Broght for the same cause, and than hir sette
Upon an hors, snow-whyt and wel ambling,
And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,[7]
With joyful peple that hir ladde and mette,
Conveyed hir, and thus the day they spende
In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

1 even if I were to be
2 apparel
3 their
4 placed, arranged
5 jewels
6 scarcely, with difficulty

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,
I seye that to this newe markisesse
God hath swich favour sent hir, of his grace,
That it ne semed nat by lyklinesse
That she was born and fed in rudenesse,
As in a cote or in an oxe-stalle,
But norished in an emperoures halle.

Lines 344–441 are here omitted. A daughter is born to Griseida. Soon after, in order to try her patience, Walter tells her that his subjects grumble about her low birth, and announces that the child must be taken from her. The next selection embraces lines 442–518.

Whan she had herd al this, she noght ameved,[1]
Neither in word, or chere, or countenaunce;
For, as it semed, she was nat agreved.
She seyde: 'Lord, al lyth in your plesaunce;
My child and I with hertly obeisaunce[2]
Ben youres al, and ye mowe save or spille[3]
Your owene thing[4]; werketh after your wille.

Ther may nothing — God so my soule save! —
Lyken to yow that may displese me;
Ne I desyre nothing for to have,
Ne drede for to lese, save only ye;
This wil is in myn herte, and ay shal be.
No lengthe of tyme or deeth may this deface,
Ne chaunge my corage[5] to another place.'

Glad was this markis of hir answering,
But yet he feyned as he were nat so;
Al drery was his chere and his loking,
Whan that he sholde out of the chambre go.
Sone after this, a furlong wey or two,
He prively hath told al his entente
Unto a man, and to his wyf him sente.

[1] changed
[2] hearty obedience
[3] destroy
[4] possession
[5] mind, disposition

A maner[1] sergeant[2] was this privee man,
The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde
In thinges grete, and eek swich folk wel can[3]
Don execucioun on thinges badde.
The lord knew wel that he him loved and dradde;
And whan this sergeant wiste his lordes wille,
Into the chambre he stalked him ful stille.

'Madame,' he seyde, 'ye mote foryeve it me,
Thogh I do thing to which I am constreyned;
Ye ben so wys that ful wel knowe ye
That lordes hestes mowe nat been yfeyned[4];
They mowe wel ben biwailled or compleyned,
But men mot nede unto her[5] lust obeye,
And so wol I; ther is namore to seye.

This child I am comanded for to take';
And spak namore, but out the child he hente[6]
Despitously, and gan a chere[7] make
As though he wolde han slayn it er he wente.
Grisildis mot al suffren and consente;
And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,
And leet this cruel sergeant doon his wille.

Suspecious was the diffame[8] of this man,
Suspect his face, suspect his word also;
Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.
Allas! hir doghter that she lovede so,
She wende he wolde han slawen it right tho.
But natheless she neither weep ne syked,[9]
Consenting hir to that the markis lyked.

But atte laste speken she bigan,
And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,
So as he was a worthy gentil man,

[1] sort of
[2] officer
[3] know how to
[4] evaded
[5] their
[6] seized
[7] beha
[8] ill re
[9] sigh

That she moste[1] kisse hir child er that it deyde;
And in her barm[2] this litel child she leyde
With ful sad face, and gan the child to kisse,
And lulled it, and after gan it blisse.[3]

And thus she seyde in hir benigne voys:
'Farweel, my child; I shal thee never see;
But, sith I thee have marked with the croys,
Of thilke Fader blessed mote thou be
That for us deyde upon a croys of tree!
Thy soule, litel child, I him bitake,[4]
For this night shaltow dyen for my sake.'

I trowe that to a norice[5] in this cas
It had ben hard this rewthe for to se;
Wel mighte a mooder than han cryed 'Allas!'
But nathelees so sad stedfast was she,
That she endured all adversitee,
And to the sergeant mekely she sayde:
'Have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde.

Goth now,' quod she, 'and dooth my lordes heste,
But o thing wol I preye yow of your grace,
That, but[6] my lord forbad yow, atte leste
Burieth this litel body in som place,
That bestes ne no briddes it torace.[7]'
But he no word wol to that purpos seye,
But took the child, and wente upon his weye.

9–756 are here omitted. The child is taken in safety to Boulogne to Walter's sister, the countess. After four years a boy is born, and, to try Griselda's patience yet further, this child, too, is taken from her, and similarly disposed of. As a last test, Walter tells her that she herself must leave him, and return to her father's cottage, for his people demand that he take a high-born wife. The next selection embraces lines 757–805.

1 might
2 lap
3 bless
4 commit
5 nurse
6 unless
7 tear to pieces

And she answerde agayn in pacience:
'My lord,' quod she, 'I woot, and wiste alway,
How that bitwixen your magnificence
And my poverte no wight [ne] can ne may
Maken comparison; it is no nay.
I heeld[1] me never digne in no manere
To be your wyf, no, ne your chamberere.[2]

And in this hous, ther ye me lady made—
The heighe God take I for my witnesse,
And also wisly he my soule glade[3]—
I never heeld me lady ne maistresse,
But humble servant to your worthinesse,
And ever shal, whyl that my lyf may dure,
Aboven every worldly creature.

That ye so longe of your benignitee
Han holden me in honour and nobleye,
Whereas I was noght worthy for to be,
That thonke I God and yow, to whom I preye
Foryelde[4] it yow; there is namore to seye.
Unto my fader gladly wol I wende,
And with him dwelle unto my lyves ende.

Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,
Til I be deed, my lyf ther wol I lede,
A widwe clene, in body, herte, and al.
For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,
And am your trewe wyf, it is no drede,
God shilde[5] swich a lordes wyf to take
Another man to housbonde or to make.

And of your newe wyf, God of his grace
So graunte yow wele and prosperitee!
For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,

[1] MS. ne heeld
[2] chambermaid
[3] comfort
[4] to requite
[5]

In which that I was blisful wont to be;
For sith it lyketh yow, my lord,' quod she,
'That whylom weren al myn hertes reste,
That I shal goon, I wol gon whan yow leste.

But ther as ye me profre swich dowaire
As I first broghte, it is wel in my minde
It were my wrecched clothes, nothing faire,
The which to me were hard now for to finde.
O gode God! how gentil and how kinde
Ye semed by your speche and your visage
The day that maked was our mariage!

But sooth is seyd, algate[1] I finde it trewe—
For in effect it preved is on me—
Love is noght old as whan that it is newe.
But certes, lord, for noon adversitee,
To dyen in the cas,[2] it shal nat be
That ever in word or werk I shal repente
That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.'

Lines 806–994 are here omitted. Griselda returns to her father's home, with but a single garment, and Walter's prospective marriage is announced. Soon he summons Griselda to prepare his house for the bride's coming, and she meekly obeys. When the bride and her brother appear, Griselda praises the maiden's beauty, and begs Walter to deal with her gently and kindly. The next selection embraces lines 995–1071.

'This is ynogh, Grisilde myn,' quod he,
'Be now namore agast ne yvel apayed[3];
I have thy feith and thy benignitee,
As wel as ever womman was, assayed,
In greet estaat, and povreliche arrayed.
Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfastnesse'—
And hir in armes took, and gan hir kesse.

1 at any rate 2 though death were the result 3 ill pleased

And she for wonder took of it no keep[1];
She herde nat what thing he to hir seyde;
She ferde[2] as she had stert out of a sleep,
Til she out of hir masednesse abreyde.[3]
'Grisilde,' quod he, 'by God that for us deyde,
Thou art my wyf, ne noon other I have,
Ne never hadde, as God my soule save!

This is thy doghter which thou hast supposed
To be my wyf; that other feithfully
Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed;
Thou bare him in thy body trewely.
At Boloigne have I kept hem[4] prively;
Tak hem agayn, for now maystow nat seye
That thou hast lorn non of thy children tweye.

And folk that otherweyes[5] han seyd of me,
I warne hem wel that I have doon this dede
For no malice ne for no crueltee,
But for t'assaye in thee thy wommanhede,
And nat to sleen my children — God forbede! —
But for to kepe hem prively and stille,
Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.'

Whan she this herde, aswowne doun she falleth
For pitous joye, and after hir swowninge
She bothe hir yonge children unto hir calleth,
And in hir armes, pitously wepinge,
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissinge
Ful lyk a mooder, with hir salte teres
She batheth bothe hir[6] visage and hir heres.

O, which a pitous thing it was to see
Hir swowning, and hir humble voys to here!
'Graunt mercy,[7] lord! that thanke I yow,' quod

1 notice
2 behaved
3 awoke
4 them
5 otherwise
6 their
7 best tl

'That ye han saved me my children dere!
Now rekke I never to ben deed right here;
Sith I stonde in your love and in your grace,
No fors of[1] deeth, ne whan my spirit pace!

O tendre, o dere, o yonge children myne,
Your woful mooder wende[2] stedfastly
That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne
Hadde eten yow; but God, of his mercy,
And your benigne fader tendrely
Hath doon yow kept[3]'; and in that same stounde[4]
Al sodeynly she swapte[5] adoun to grounde.

And in her swough[6] so sadly holdeth she
Hir children two, whan she gan hem t' embrace,
That with greet sleighte[7] and greet difficultee
The children from hir arm they gonne arace.[8]
O many a teer on many a pitous face
Doun ran, of hem that stoden hir bisyde;
Unnethe[9] abouten hir mighte they abyde.

Walter hir gladeth,[10] and hir sorwe slaketh[11];
She ryseth up, abaysed,[12] from hir traunce,
And every wight hir joye and feste maketh,
Til she hath caught agayn hir contenaunce.
Walter hir dooth so feithfully plesaunce
That it was deyntee[13] for to seen the chere
Bitwixe hem two, now they ben met yfere.[14]

Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say,[15]
Han taken hir, and into chambre goon,
And strepen hir out of hir rude array;

1 no matter for
2 believed
3 caused you to be saved
4 moment
5 fell
6 swoon
7 dexterity
8 tear away
9 scarcely
10 cheers
11 assuages
12 amazed
13 delightful
14 together
15 saw

And in a cloth of gold that brighte shoon,
With a coroune of many a riche stoon
Upon hir heed, they into halle hir broghte,
And ther she was honoured as hir oghte.

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,
For every man and womman dooth his might
This day in murthe and revel to dispende,
Til on the welkne[1] shoon the sterres light.
For more solempne in every mannes sight
This feste was, and gretter of costage,[2]
Than was the revel of hir mariage.

THE FOX AND THE WOLF

The Fox and the Wolf is found in the same manuscript as *Dame Sirith*, and may therefore be assigned to the same date. It is a humorous beast-tale, a species of which this is the only English representative before the time of Chaucer. A version is to be found in Harris' *Uncle Remus Stories*, under the title, 'Old Mr. Rabbit, he 's a Good Fisherman.' For the bibliography of the subject, see McKnight, *Middle English Humorous Tales in Verse* (D. C. Heath & Co., 1913).

Of the *Roman de Renard*, to which our poem is related, Jusserand says (I. 152): 'Superb manuscripts were illustrated for the libraries of the nobles; the incidents of this epic were represented in tapestry, sculptured on church stalls, painted on the margins of English missals. At the Renaissance, Caxton, with his Westminster presses, printed a Renard in prose.'

The dialect is Southern — *vox* for *fox*, etc.; and *v* is sometimes represented by *w*. The misplacement of *h*, now a mark of Cockney speech, is frequent.

A vox gon out of þe wode go,
Afingret[3] so þat him wes wo;
He nes nevere in none wise
Afingret erour[4] half so swiþe.[5]
He ne hoeld[6] nouþer wey ne strete,

[1] welkin, heaven
[2] expense
[3] ahungered
[4] before
[5] much
[6] held, kep

For him wes loþ men to mete;
Him were levere meten one hen
Þen half an oundred[1] wimmen.
He strok[2] swiþe[3] overal,[4]
So þat[5] he ofsei[6] ane wal;
Wiþinne þe walle wes on[7] hous.
The wox wes þider[8] swiþe wous,[9]
For he þouhte[10] his hounger aquenche,[11]
Oþer mid mete, oþer mid drenche.[12]
Abouten he biheld wel ȝerne[13];
Þo eroust[14] bigon þe vox to erne[15]
Al fort[16] he come to one walle;
And som þerof wes afalle,
And wes þe wal overal tobroke,[17]
And on ȝat[18] þer wes iloke.[19]
At þe furmeste[20] bruche[21] þat he fond,
He lep in, and over he wond.[22]
  Þo he wes inne, smere[23] he lou,[24]
And þerof he hadde gome[25] inou;
For he com in wiþouten leve
Boþen of haiward[26] and of reve.[27]
On hous þer wes — þe dore wes ope —
Hennen weren þerinne icrope[28] —
Five, þat makeþ anne flok —
And mid hem sat on kok.
Þe kok him wes flowen on hey,
And two hennen him seten ney.
  'Wox,' quod þe kok, 'wat dest þou þare?

1 a hundred
2 went, passed (OE. *strīcan*)
3 soon
4 everywhere
5 until
6 observed
7 a
8 (to go) thither
9 ready (OE. *fūs*)
10 thought; MS. þohute
11 to appease
12 MS. drunche
13 eagerly
14 then first
15 run
16 until
17 broken to pieces
18 gate
19 locked
20 first
21 breach, opening
22 went, wriggled (OE. *windan*)
23 scornfully
24 laughed
25 sport
26 hedge-ward (one who protected the crops within enclosed fields)
27 reeve (farm-overseer)
28 crept (OE. *crēopan*)

Go hom, Crist þe ȝeve kare!
Houre[1] hennen þou dest ofte shome.[2]'
'Be stille, Ich hote,[3] a Godes nome!'
Quaþ þe wox: 'Sire Chauntecler,
Þou fle adoun, and com me ner.
I nabbe[4] don her nout bote goed,
I have leten þine hennen blod;
Hy weren seke ounder þe ribe,
Þat hy ne miȝtte non lengour libe[5]
Bote[6] here heddre[7] were itake[8];
Þat I do for almes sake.
Ich have hem letten eddre[7] blod,
And þe, Chauntecler, hit wolde don goed
Þou havest þat ilke ounder þe splen,[9]
Þou nestes[10] nevere daies ten;
For þine lif-dayes beþ al ago,
Bote þou bi mine rede[11] do;
I do þe lete blod ounder þe brest,
Oþer sone axe after þe prest.'
'Go wei,' quod þe kok, 'wo þe bigo[12]
Þou havest don oure kunne[13] wo.
Go mid[14] þan þat þou havest nouþe[15];
Acoursed be þou of Godes mouþe!
For were I adoun, bi Godes nome,
Ich miȝte ben siker of oþre shome.
Ac weste[16] hit houre cellerer[17]
Þat þou were icomen her,
He wolde sone after þe ȝonge,
Mid pikes, and stones, and staves stronge;
Alle þine bones he wolde tobreke;
Þene we weren wel awreke.[18]'

1 our
2 shame, dishonor
3 bid
4 have not
5 live
6 unless
7 vein (OE. *ǣdre*)
8 opened (?)
9 spleen
10 dost build a nest
11 counsel
12 take possession of
13 kind, race
14 with
15 now
16 if (our cellarer) k
17 cellarer
18 avenged

He[1] wes stille, ne spak namore,
Ac he werþ[2] aþurst wel sore;
Þe þurst him dede more wo
Þen hevede raþer[3] his hounger do.
Overal he ede[4] and souhte;[5]
On aventure his witt[6] him brouhte[7]
To one putte[8] — wes water inne —
Þat wes imaked mid grete ginne.[9]
Tuo boketes þer he founde:
Þat oþer[10] wende to þe grounde,
Þat wen[11] me shulde þat on opwinde,
Þat oþer wolde adoun winde.
He ne hounderstod nout of þe ginne;
He nom[12] þat boket, and lep þerinne,
For he hopede inou to drinke.
Þis boket beginneþ to sinke;
To late þe vox wes biþout,[13]
Þo he wes in þe ginne ibrout.
Inou he gon him biþenche,
Ac hit ne halp mid none wrenche[14];
Adoun he moste, he wes þerinne;
Ikaut he wes mid swikele[15] ginne.
Hit miȝte han iben wel his wille
To lete þat boket hongi stille.
Wat[16] mid serewe[17] and mid drede
Al his þurst him overhede.[18]
Al þus he com to þe grounde,
And water inou þer he founde.
Þo he fond water, ȝerne he dronk;
Him þoute þat water þere stonk,
For hit wes toȝeines his wille.

the fox
became
earlier, before
went (OE. ēode)
MS. sohute
MS. wiit
[7] MS. brohute
[8] pit, well
[9] clever contrivance
[10] second
[11] when
[12] took
[13] had bethought himself
[14] trick
[15] deceiving
[16] what
[17] sorrow
[18] passed away (OE. oferēode)

Go hom, Crist þe ȝeve kare!
Houre[1] hennen þou dest ofte sho
'Be stille, Ich hote,[3] a Godes n
Quaþ þe wox: 'Sire Chauntecler,
þou fle adoun, and com me ner.
I nabbe[4] don her nout bote goed,
I have leten þine hennen blod;
Hy weren seke ounder þe ribe,
þat hy ne miȝtte non lengour libe
Bote[6] here heddre[7] were itake[8];
þat I do for almes sake.
Ich have hem letten eddre[7] blod,
And þe, Chauntecler, hit wolde don goed.
þou havest þat ilke ounder þe splen,[9]
þou nestes[10] nevere daies ten;
For þine lif-dayes beþ al ago,
Bote þou bi mine rede[11] do;
I do þe lete blod ounder þe brest,
Oþer sone axe after þe prest.'
'Go wei,' quod þe kok, 'wo þe bigo[12]!
þou havest don oure kunne[13] wo.
Go mid[14] þan þat þou havest nouþe[15];
Acoursed be þou of Godes mouþe!
For were I adoun, bi Godes nome,
Ich miȝte ben siker of oþre shome.
Ac weste[16] hit houre cellerer[17]
þat þou were icomen her,
He wolde sone after þe ȝonge,
Mid pikes, and stones, and staves stronge;
Alle þine bones he wolde tobreke;
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1 our
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15 now
16 if (our cellai
17 cellarer
18 avenged

He[1] wes stille, ne spak namore,
Ac he werþ[2] aþurst wel sore;
Þe þurst him dede more wo
Þen hevede raþer[3] his hounger do.
Overal he ede[4] and souhte;[5]
On aventure his witt[6] him brouhte[7]
To one putte[8] — wes water inne —
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Tuo boketes þer he founde:
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Þat wen[11] me shulde þat on opwinde,
Þat oþer wolde adoun winde.
He ne hounderstod nout of þe ginne;
He nom[12] þat boket, and lep þerinne,
For he hopede inou to drinke.
Þis boket beginneþ to sinke;
To late þe vox wes biþout,[13]
Þo he wes in þe ginne ibrout.
Inou he gon him biþenche,
Ac hit ne halp mid none wrenche[14];
Adoun he moste, he wes þerinne;
Ikaut he wes mid swikele[15] ginne.
Hit miȝte han iben wel his wille
To lete þat boket hongi stille.
Wat[16] mid serewe[17] and mid drede
Al his þurst him overhede.[18]
Al þus he com to þe grounde,
And water inou þer he founde.
Þo he fond water, ȝerne he dronk;
Him þoute þat water þere stonk,
For hit wes toȝeines his wille.

[1] the fox
[2] became
[3] earlier, before
[4] went (OE. *ēode*)
[5] MS. sohute
[6] MS. wiit
[7] MS. brohute
[8] pit, well
[9] clever contrivance
[10] second
[11] when
[12] took
[13] had bethought himself
[14] trick
[15] deceiving
[16] what
[17] sorrow
[18] passed away (OE. *oferēode*)

'Wo worþe,' quaþ þe vox, 'lust a
Þat ne can[1] meþ[2] to his mete!
Ȝef ich nevede to muchel i-ete,
Þis ilke shome nedd[3] I nouþe,
Nedde lust iben of mine mouþe.
Him is wo in euche londe,
Þat is þef mid his honde.
Ich am ikaut mid swikele ginne,
Oþer soum devel me broute herinne
I was woned[4] to ben wiis,
Ac nou of me idon hit hiis.[5]'
Þe vox wep, and reuliche[6] bigan.
Þer com a wolf gon after þan
Out of þe depe wode blive,[7]
For he wes afingret swiþe.
Noþing he ne founde in al þe niȝte,
Wermide[8] his honger aquenche miȝtte.
He com to þe putte, þene vox iherde;
He him kneu wel bi his rerde,[9]
For hit wes his neiȝebore,
And his gossip, of[10] children bore.
Adoun bi þe putte he sat.
Quod þe wolf: 'Wat may ben þat
Þat Ich in þe putte ihere?
Hertou[11] Cristine, oþer mi fere[12]?
Say me soþ, ne gabbe[13] þou me nout,
Wo[14] haveþ þe in þe putte ibrout?'
Þe vox hine ikneu wel for his kun,
And þo eroust kom wiit to him;
For he þoute mid soumme ginne
Himself houpbringe,[15] þene wolf þerinne.

1 knows
2 moderation
3 should not have had
4 accustomed, wont
5 [illegible]
6 sadly
7 quickly
8 wherewith
9 speech
14 who

Quod þe vox: 'Wo is nou þere?
Ich wene hit is Sigrim þat Ich here.'
'Þat is soþ,' þe wolf sede;
'Ac wat art þou, so God þe rede?'
'A!' quod þe vox, 'Ich wille þe telle;
On alpi[1] word Ich lie nelle.[2]
Ich am Reneuard, þi frend,
And ȝif Ich þine come[3] hevede iwend,[4]
Ich hedde so ibede[5] for þe,
Þat þou sholdest comen to me.'
'Mid þe?' quod þe wolf. 'War to?
Wat shulde Ich ine þe putte do?'
Quod þe vox: 'Þou art ounwiis,
Her is þe blisse of paradiis;
Her Ich mai evere wel fare,
Wiþouten pine,[6] wiþouten kare;
Her is mete, her is drinke,
Her is blisse wiþouten swinke[7];
Her nis hounger never mo,
Ne non oþer kunnes[8] wo;
Of alle gode her is inou.'
Mid þilke wordes þe wolf[9] lou.
'Art þou ded, so God þe rede,
Oþer of þe worlde?' þe wolf sede.
Quod þe wolf: 'Wenne storve[10] þou,
And wat dest þou þere nou?
Ne beþ nout ȝet þre daies ago,
Þat þou and þi wif also,
And þine children, smale and grete,
Alle togedere mid me hete.[11]'
'Þat is soþ,' quod þe vox,
'Gode þonk, nou hit is þus,
Þat Ihc am to Criste vend[12];

[1] single (OE. *ānlīpig*)
[2] will not
[3] coming
[4] thought of
[5] prayed
[6] pain, trouble
[7] labor
[8] of no other kind
[9] MS. volf
[10] diedst
[11] ate
[12] = wend

Not[1] hit non of mine frend.
I nolde, for al þe worldes goed,
Ben ine þe worlde, þer Ich hem fond;
Wat[2] shuld Ich ine þe worlde go,
Þer[3] nis bote kare and wo,
And livie in fulþe[4] and in sunne?
Ac her beþ joies fele cunne[5];
Her beþ boþe shep and get.[6]'
  Þe wolf haveþ hounger swiþe gret,
For he nedde ȝare[7] i-ete;
And þo he herde speken of mete,
He wolde bleþeliche[8] ben þare.
'A!' quod þe wolf, 'gode ifere,[9]
Moni goed mel þou havest me binome[10]
Let me adoun to þe kome,
And al Ich wole þe forȝeve.'
  'Ȝe,' quod þe vox, 'were þou isrive,[11]
And sunnen hevedest al forsake,
And to klene lif itake,
Ich wolde so bidde for þe
Þat þou sholdest comen to me.'
  'To wom shuld Ich,' þe wolfe seide,
Ben iknowe of[12] mine misdede?
Her nis noþing alive
Þat me kouþe her nou srive.
Þou havest ben ofte min ifere,
Woltou nou mi srift[13] ihere,
And al mi liif I shal þe telle?'
  'Nay,' quod þe vox, 'I nelle.'
  'Neltou[14]?' quod þe wolf; 'þin ore
Ich am afingret swiþe sore;
Ich wot to-niȝt ich worþe ded

[1] knows not
[2] why (what)
[3] where
[4] filth, foulness
[5] many kinds
[6] goats
[7] for a long time
[8] gladly
[9] friend, companion (OE. *geféra*)
[10] taken away [illegible]
[11] shriven
[12] confess
[13] shrift, confe[illegible]
[14] wilt thou no[illegible]

Bote þou do me somne reed.
For Cristes love, be mi prest.'
 Þe wolf bey[1] adoun his brest,
And gon to siken[2] harde and stronge.
 'Woltou,' quod þe vox, 'srift ounderfonge,[3]
Tel þine sunnen on and on,[4]
Þat þer bileve[5] never on.'
 'Sone,' quod þe wolf, 'wel ifaie[6];
Ich habbe ben qued[7] al mi lifdaie;
Ich habbe widewene[8] kors,[9]
Þerfore ich fare þe wors.
A þousent shep ich habbe abiten,
And mo, ȝef hy weren iwriten,
Ac hit me ofþinkeþ[10] sore.
Maister, shal I tellen more?'
 'Ȝe,' quod þe vox, 'al þou most sugge,[11]
Oþer elleswer þou most abugge.[12]'
 'Gossip,' quod þe wolf, 'forȝef hit me,
Ich habbe ofte sehid qued bi[13] þe.
Men seide þat þou on þine live
Misferdest[14] mid mine wive;
Ich þe aperseivede one stounde,
And in bedde togedere ou[15] founde;
Ich wes ofte ou ful ney,
And in bedde togedere ou sey.[16]
Ich wende, also oþre doþ,
Þat[17] Ich iseie were soþ,
And þerfore þou were me loþ;
Gode gossip, ne be þou nouht[18] wroþ.'
 'Wolf,' quod þe vox him þo,
'Al þat þou havest her bifore ido,

[1] bowed
[2] groan
[3] receive
[4] one by one
[5] remain
[6] gladly, fain; MS. I fare
[7] evil
[8] of widows
[9] curse
[10] repents (it repents me = I repent)
[11] say
[12] make atonement
[13] said evil of
[14] went astray, sinned
[15] you
[16] saw; MS. ley
[17] what
[18] MS. nohut

In þouht,[1] in speche, and in dede,
In euche oþeres kunnes[2] quede,
Ich þe forȝeve at þisse nede.'
'Crist þe forȝelde!' þe wolf seide.
'Nou Ich am in clene live,
Ne recche Ich of childe ne of wive.
Ac sei me wat I shal do,
And ou[3] Ich may comen þe to.'
'Do?' quod þe vox. 'Ich wille þe lere.[4]
Isiist þou a boket hongi þere?
Þere is a bruche of hevene blisse.[5]
Lep þerinne, mid iwisse,
And þou shalt comen to me sone.'
Quod the wolf, 'Þat is liȝt to done.'
He lep in, and way[6] sumdel[7] —
Þat weste[8] þe vox ful wel.
Þe wolf gon sinke, þe vox arise;
Þo gon þe wolf sore agrise.[9]
Þo he com amidde þe putte,
Þe wolfe þene vox opward[10] mette.
'Gossip,' quod þe wolf, 'wat nou?
Wat havest þou imunt[11]? weder wolt þou?'
'Weder Ich wille?' þe vox sede.
'Ich wille oup, so God me rede!
And nou go doun wiþ þi meel,[12]
Þi biȝete[13] worþ wel smal;
Ac Ich am þerof glad and bliþe,
Þat þou art nomen[14] in clene live.
Þi soule-cnul[15] Ich wille do ringe,
And masse for þine soule singe.'
Þe wrecche bineþe noþing ne vind
Bote cold water, and hounger him bind;

1 MS. þohut
2 of every other kind
3 how
4 teach
5 opening into (chance at) heaven's joy
6 weighed
7 somewhat
8 knew
9 to be alarmed
10 on his way up
11 meant, intended
12 toward thy meal
13 getting, spoil
14 taken
15 soul-knell

To colde gistninge [1] he wes ibede [2];
Vroggen [3] haveþ his dou iknede.[4]
Þe wolf in þe putte stod,
Afingret so þat he ves wod.[5]
Inou he cursede þat þider him broute;
Þe vox þerof luitel route.[6]
  Þe put him wes þe house ney,
Þer freren woneden swiþe sley.[7]
Þo þat hit com to þe time
Þat hoe shulden arisen ine,
For to suggen here houssong,[8]
O frere þere wes among,
Of here slep hem shulde awecche,
Wen hoe [9] shulden þidere recche.[10]
He seide: 'Ariseþ on and on,
And komeþ to houssong hevereuch on.'
Þis ilke frere heyte [11] Ailmer;
He wes hoere maister curtiler.[12]
He wes hofþurst swiþe stronge;
Riȝt amidward here houssonge,
Alhone [13] to þe putte he hede,[14]
For he wende bete [15] his nede.
He com to þe putte, and drou,
And þe wolf wes hevi inou.
Þe frere mid al his maine [16] tey [17]
So longe þat [18] he þene wolf isey!
For he sei þene wolf þer sitte,
He gradde [19]: 'Þe devel is in þe putte!'
To þe putte hy gounnen gon,
Alle mid pikes, and staves, and ston,
Euch mon mid þat he hedde;

1 feast
2 invited
3 frogs; MS. wroggen
4 dough kneaded
5 mad, crazed
6 recked
7 shrewd
8 matins (OE. *ūhtsong*)
9 they
10 go
11 was named
12 gardener
13 alone
14 went
15 remedy, satisfy
16 strength (OE. *mægen*; cf. modern 'might and main')
17 pulled, tugged
18 until
19 cried out

No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte;
Hir dyete was accordant[1] to hir cote[2]—
Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;
Attempree[3] dyete was al hir phisyk,
And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce.[4]
The goute lette[5] hir nothing[6] for to daunce,
N' apoplexye shente[7] nat hir heed;
No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed;
Hir bord[8] was served most with whyt and blak,
Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak,
Seynd[9] bacoun, and somtyme an ey[10] or tweye,
For she was as it were a maner[11] deye.[12]
  A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dich withoute,
In which she hadde a cok, hight[13] Chauntecleer.
In al the land of crowing nas[14] his peer;
His vois was merier than the mery orgon
On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;
Wel sikerer[15] was his crowing in his logge[16]
Than is a clokke, or an abbey -orlogge.[17]
By nature knew he ech ascencioun
Of equinoxial[18] in thilke toun;
For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,[19]
Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended.
His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailed,[20] as it were a castel-wal;
His bile[21] was blak, and as the jeet[22] it shoon;
Lyk asur were his legges and his toon[23];

[1] in consonance with
[2] gown
[3] moderate, temperate
[4] a contented heart (heart's satisfaction)
[5] prevented
[6] not at all
[7] injured
[8] table
[9] singed, broiled
[10] egg
[11] kind of
[12] dairywoman
[13] called
[14] there was not
[15] more trustworthy
[16] lodge
[17] clock
[18] the equinoctial circle
[19] when one hour was past
[20] indented like a battlement
[21] bill
[22] jet
[23] toes

17. **orgon**: used here, as customarily at that time, in the plural.

His nayles whytter than the lilie-flour,
And lyk the burned[1] gold was his colour.
This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,
Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,
And wonder lyk to him, as of[2] colours;
Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire Damoysele Pertelote.
Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,[3]
And compaignable,[4] and bar hirself so faire,
Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
That trewely she hath the herte in hold[5]
Of Chauntecleer, loken in every lith[6];
He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.
But such a joye was it to here hem singe,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,
In swete accord, 'My lief is faren in londe.'
For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.
  And so bifel that, in a daweninge,[7]
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched[8] sore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,
She was agast, and seyde: 'O herte dere,
What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray sleper, fy! for shame!'
And he answerde and seyde thus: 'Madame,
I pray yow that ye take it nat agrief[9];

[1] burnished
[2] as regards
[3] well-mannered
[4] companionable
[5] in her possession
[6] locked in every limb
[7] d
[8] t
[9] a

17. My . . . londe: this is the first line of an old song, printed the *Athenæum* for October 24, 1896.

By God, me mette[1] I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright.
Now God,' quod he, 'my swevene[2] recche[3] aright,
And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette how that I romed up and doun
Withinne our yerde, wheras[4] I saugh a beste,
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste[5]
Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;
His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen tweye.
Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;
This caused me my groning, doutelees.'
'Avoy[6]!' quod she, 'fy on yow, hertelees!
Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that God above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love;
I can nat love a coward, by my feith!
For certes, what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,[7]
And secree,[8] and no nigard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,[9]
Ne noon avauntour,[10] by that God above!
How dorste ye seyn for shame — unto your love —
That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?
Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis?
Nothing, God wot, but vanitee in sweven is:
Swevenes engendren of[11] replecciouns,[12]
And ofte of fume,[13] and of complecciouns,[14]

1 I dreamed
2 dream
3 bring to a good issue (*lit.* interpret)
4 where
5 arrest
6 fie (OF. *avoi*)
7 generous
8 trustworthy
9 instrument, weapon
10 boaster
11 are produced by
12 surfeits
13 noxious vapor rising from stomach to brain
14 the combination of the four humors of the body in certain proportions

Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.
Certes this dreem, which ye han met [1] to-night
Cometh of the grete superfluitee
Of youre rede *colera*,[2] pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes
Of arwes,[3] and of fyr with rede lemes,[4]
Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte,
Of contek,[5] and of whelpes [6] grete and lyte [7];
Right as the humour of malencolye
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
For fere of blake beres, or boles [8] blake,
Or elles blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours coude I telle also,
That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.
Lo Catoun,[9] which that was so wys a man,
Seyde he nat thus, Ne do no fors of [10] dremes?
Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro the bem
For Goddes love, as tak [11] som laxatyf;
Up [12] peril of my soule and of my lyf,
I counseille yow the beste — I wol nat lye —
That bothe of colere and of malencolye
Ye purge yow; and, for [13] ye shul nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I shal myself to herbes techen [14] yow,
That shul ben for your hele [15] and for your prow
And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,[17]
To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for Goddes owene love!
Ye been ful colerik of complecccioun;

1 dreamed
2 one of the four so-called humors
3 arrows
4 flames
5 strife, contest
6 dogs
7 small
8 bulls
9 *Dionysii Catonis Disticha de Moribus ad Filium*
10 pay no heed to
11 pray take
12
13
14
15
16
17

Ware[1] the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote;
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,[2]
That ye shul have a fevere terciane[3]
Or an agu, that may be youre bane.
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
Of lauriol,[4] centaure,[5] and fumetere,[6]
Or elles of ellebor[7] that groweth there,
Of catapuce[8] or of gaytres beryis,[9]
Of erbe yve,[10] growing in our yerd, ther mery is;
Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.
Be mery, housbond, for your fader[11] kin!
Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow namore.'
'Madame,' quod he, 'graunt mercy[12] of your lore!
But nathelees, as touching daun[13] Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By God, men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man, more of auctoritee
Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,[14]
That al the revers[15] seyn of his sentence,[16]
And han wel founden by experience
That dremes ben significaciouns
As wel of joye as tribulaciouns
That folk enduren in this lyf present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preve[17] sheweth it in dede.
Oon of the gretteste auctours[18] that men rede
Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;

1 beware lest
2 groat
3 tertian
4 spurge-laurel
5 centaury
6 fumitory
7 hellebore
8 lesser spurge (caper spurge)
9 dogwood berries (sometimes those of other similar shrubs)
10 herb ivy (ground pine?)
11 father's
12 great thanks (gramercy)
13 lord, sir (Lat. *dominus*)
14 so may I prosper
15 opposite
16 opinion
17 proof
18 Cicero, in his *De Divinatione*

In which they bothe mighte ylogged[6] be.
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
As for that night, departen[7] compaignye;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his logging as it wolde falle.[8]
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel ynough,
As was his aventure,[9] or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune.[10]
And so bifel that, longe er it were day,
This man mette in his bed, ther as[11] he lay
How that his felawe gan upon him calle,
And seyde: "Allas! for in an oxes stalle
This night I shal be mordred ther I lye.
Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;
In alle haste com to me," he sayde.
This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde[12];
But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
He turned him, and took of this no keep[13];
Him thoughte[14] his dreem nas but a vanitee.[15]
Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he;
And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as him thoughte, and seide: "I am now slav
Bihold my blody woundes, depe and wyde!
Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,[17]
And at the west gate of the toun," quod he,

[1] concourse, gathering
[2] *supply* which was
[3] scanty
[4] lodgings
[5] one
[6] lodged
[7] part
[8] happen
[9] chance
[10] general
[11] where
[12] started up
[13] notice, hee
[14] it seemed
[15] delusion
[16] slain
[17] morning

"A carte ful of dong[1] ther shaltow see,
In which my body is hid ful prively;
Do[2] thilke carte aresten[3] boldely.
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;"
And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes in[4] he took the way;
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
After his felawe he bigan to calle.
The hostiler[5] answerde him anon,
And seyde: "Sire, your felawe is agon;
As sone as day he wente out of the toun."
This man gan fallen in suspecioun,
Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,[6]
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong-carte, as it were to donge[7] lond,
That was arrayed in the same wyse
As ye han herd the dede man devyse[8];
And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
Vengeaunce and justice of[9] this felonye:
"My felawe mordred is this same night,
And in this carte he lyth[10] gapinge upright.[11]
I crye out on the ministres," quod he,
"That sholden kepe[12] and reulen[13] this citee;
Harrow[14]! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!"
What sholde I more unto this tale sayn?
The peple outsterte,[15] and caste the cart to grounde,
And in the middel of the dong they founde

1 dung
2 cause
3 to be stopped
4 inn
5 innkeeper
6 delay
7 cover with manure
8 relate
9 for
10 lieth
11 on his back
12 watch over
13 rule
14 a cry of distress
15 *started out*

The dede man, that mordred was al newe.[1]
O blisful God, that art so just and trewe!
Lo, how that thou biwreyest[2] mordre alway!
Mordre wol out — that see we day by day.
Mordre is so wlatsom[3] and abhominable
To God, that is so just and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled[4] be;
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
Mordre wol out — this 's my conclusioun.
And right anoon, ministres of that toun
Han hent[5] the carter, and so sore him pyned,[6]
And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,[7]
That thay biknewe[8] hir wikkednesse anoon,
And were anhanged by the nekke-boon.
Here may men seen that dremes been to drede.
And certes, in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this
— I gabbe[9] nat, so have I joye or blis —
Two men that wolde han passed over see,
For certeyn cause, into a fer contree,
If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.
But on a day, agayn[10] the eventyde,
The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste.[11]
Jolif[12] and glad they wente unto hir reste,
And casten[13] hem ful erly for to saille;
But to that oo[14] man fil[15] a greet mervaille.
That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn[10] the day:
Him thoughte[16] a man stood by his beddes syde,

1 recently
2 dost make manifest, bring to light
3 heinous
4 concealed
5 seized
6 tortured
7 racked
8 confessed
9 lie
10 towards
11 was agreeable to them
12 in good spirits
13 proposed
14 one
15 befell
16 it seemed to hin

And him comaunded that he sholde abyde,
And seyde him thus: "If thou to-morwe wende,
Thou shalt be dreynt[1]; my tale is at an ende."
He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
And preyde him his viage[2] for to lette[3];
As for that day, he preyde him to abyde.
His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
"No dreem," quod he, "may so myn herte agaste,
That I wol lette for to do my thinges.[4]
I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,
For swevenes been but vanitees and japes[5]:
Men dreme alday[6] of owles or of apes,
And eke of many a mase[7] therwithal;
Men dreme of thing that never was ne shal.[8]
But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,
And thus forsleuthen[9] wilfully thy tyde,[10]
God wot it reweth me[11]; and have good day."
And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
But er that he hadde halfe his cours yseyled,
Noot I[12] nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled,[13]
But casuelly[14] the shippes botme[15] rente,[16]
And ship and man under the water wente,
In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,
By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,[17]
That no man sholde been to recchelees[18]
Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.
Lo, in the lyf of Seint Kenelm I rede —

[1] drowned
[2] journey
[3] abandon, give up
[4] business affairs
[5] jests, tricks
[6] continually
[7] bewildering situation
[8] shall be
[9] waste in sloth
[10] time
[11] I am sorry
[12] I know not
[13] (there) ailed
[14] by accident
[15] bottom
[16] split
[17] mayst thou learn
[18] heedless

That was Kenulphus[1] sone, the noble king
Of Mercenrike[2] — how Kenelm mette a thing;
A lyte[3] er he was mordred, on a day,
His mordre in his avisioun[4] he say.[5]
His norice[6] him expouned[7] every del[8]
His sweven, and bad him for to kepe[9] him wel
For[10] traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer old,
And therfore litel tale hath he told[11]
Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
By God, I hadde lever than my sherte
That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus, that writ th' avisioun
In Affrike of the worthy Cipioun,
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
Warning of thinges that men after[12] seen.
And forthermore, I pray yow loketh wel
In the Olde Testament, of[13] Daniel,
If he held dremes any vanitee.
Reed eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see
Wher[14] dremes ben somtyme — I sey nat alle —
Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
Loke of Egipt the king, Daun Pharao,
His bakere and his boteler also,
Wher[14] they ne felte noon effect[15] in dremes.
Whoso wol seken actes of sondry remes,[16]
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde[17] king,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,

[1] Kenulf (died 819)
[2] Mercia
[3] little
[4] vision
[5] saw
[6] nurse
[7] explained
[8] bit
[9] guard
[10] against
[11] account hath he made
[12] afterwards
[13] as to
[14] wheth
[15] reality
[16] realms
[17] Lydia

13. avisioun: the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, with a comment[a]
[M]acrobius.
29. For this dream, cf. the *Monk's Tale*.

Which signified he sholde anhanged be?
Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores[1] wyf,
That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
She dremed on the same night biforn
How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,[2]
If thilke day he wente into bataille.
She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
He wente for to fighte nathelees,
But he was slayn anoon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eek it is ny[3] day, I may nat dwelle.[4]
Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
That I shal han of this avisioun
Adversitee; and I seye, forthermore,
That I ne telle[5] of laxatyves no store,
For they ben venimous,[6] I woot it wel;
I hem defye, I love hem never a del.[7]
Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte[8] al this;
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thing God hath sent me large grace;
For whan I see the beautee of your face,
Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën,[9]
It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
For, also siker[10] as *In principio*,[11]
Mulier est hominis confusio;
Madame, the sentence[12] of this Latin is:
"Womman is mannes joye and al his blis."
For whan I fele anight[13] your softe syde, . . .[14]
I am so ful of joye and of solas
That I defye bothe sweven and dreem.'
And with that word he fley doun fro the beem,

1 Hector's
2 lost
3 nearly
4 continue
5 set
6 poisonous
7 never a whit
8 cease
9 eyes
10 sure
11 John i. 1
12 meaning
13 by night
14 Two lines omitted

2. In Dares Phrygius, not in Homer.

For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
And with a chuk[1] he gan hem for to calle,
For he had founde a corn, lay[2] in the yerd;
Royal he was, he was namore aferd. . . .[3]
He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
And on his toos he rometh up and doun,
Him deyned[4] not to sette his foot to ground
He chukketh whan he hath a corn yfounde,
And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture;
And after wol I telle his aventure.
  Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan God first maked man,
Was complet, and [y]passed were also,
Sin March was goon,[5] [wel] thritty dayes and two,
Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
His seven wyves walking by his syde,
Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde yronne[6]
Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat more;
And knew by kynde,[7] and by noon other lore,[8]
That it was pryme,[9] and crew with blisful stevene.[10]
'The sonne,' he sayde, 'is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon, and more, ywis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkneth thise[11] blisful briddes how they singe,
And see the fresshe floures how they springe;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.'
But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas,[12]

1 cluck
2 that lay
3 Two lines omitted
4 he deigned
5 MS. bigan (*for* was goon)
6 run, progressed
7 nature
8 teaching
9 abo
10 voice, sound
11 these
12 misfortune

14. maked: this was a mediæval idea.

For ever the latter ende of joye is wo.
God woot that worldly joye is sone ago[1];
And if a rethor[2] coude faire endyte,[3]
He in a cronique[4] saufly[5] mighte it wryte,
As for a sovereyn notabilitee.[6]
Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;
This storie is also trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.[7]
A colfox,[8] ful of sly iniquitee,
That in the grove hadde woned[9] yeres three,
By[10] heigh imaginacioun forncast,[11]
The same night thurghout the hegges[12] brast[13]
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;
And in a bed of wortes[14] stille he lay,
Til it was passed undern[15] of the day,
Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
As gladly[16] doon thise[17] homicydes alle,
That in awayt[18] liggen[19] to mordre men.
O false mordrer, lurking in thy den!
O newe Scariot,[20] newe Genilon[21]!
False dissimilour,[22] O Greek Sinon,
That broghtest Troye al outrely[23] to sorwe!
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
That thou into that yerd flough[24] fro the bemes!
Thou were ful wel ywarned by thy dremes
That thilke day was perilous to thee,

1 past
2 skilled writer
3 compose
4 chronicle
5 safely
6 supremely notable fact
7 subject
8 brant fox (having a large intermixture of black in its fur)
9 dwelt
10 as a result of
11 premeditated
12 hedges
13 burst
14 herbs
15 about 11 A.M.
16 generally
17 these
18 waiting
19 lie
20 Iscariot
21 Ganelon, who betrayed Roland
22 dissembler
23 utterly
24 flew

And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.
Thise[1] been[2] the cokkes wordes, and nat myne;
I can[3] noon harm of no womman divyne.
  Faire in the sond,[4] to bathe hir merily,
Lyth[5] Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,
Agayn[6] the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
Song merier than the mermayde in the see—
For *Phisiologus* seith sikerly
How that they singen wel and merily.
And so bifel that, as he caste his yë,
Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
He was war[7] of this fox that lay ful lowe.
Nothing ne liste him[8] thanne for to crowe,
But cryde anon, 'Cok, cok,' and up he sterte,
As man that was affrayed in his herte;
For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
Fro his contrarie,[9] if he may it see,
Though he never erst[10] had seyn it with his yë.
  This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,
He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
Seyde: 'Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend?
Now certes, I were worse than a feend,[11]
If I to yow wolde[12] harm or vileinye.
I am nat come your counseil for t'espye;
But trewely, the cause of my cominge
Was only for to herkne how that ye singe,
For trewely ye have as mery a stevene[13]
As eny aungel hath that is in hevene;
Therwith ye han in musik more felinge
Than hadde Boëce,[14] or any that can singe.

1 these
2 are
3 know
4 sand
5 lieth
6 exposed to
7 aware
8 it pleased him not at all
9 opposite, foe
10 before
11 fiend, devil
12 wished
13 voice
14 Boethius wrote a treatise, *De Musica*

8. In the section De Sirenis. For the *Physiologus* in general, see p. 316.

My lord your fader — God his soule blesse! —
And eek your moder, of hir gentilesse,
Han in myn hous ybeen, to my gret ese[1];
And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
But for men speke of singing, I wol saye —
So mote I brouke[2] wel myn eyen tweye! —
Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
As dide your fader in the morweninge;
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
And, for to make his voys the more strong,
He wolde so peyne him[3] that with bothe his yë
He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.
And eek he was of swich discrecioun
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
I have wel rad in *Daun Burnel the Asse*,
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok
Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,[4]
He made him for to lese his benefyce.
But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
Now singeth, sire, for seinte charitee;
Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete[5]?'
  This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,
As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
So was he ravisshed with his flaterye.
Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour[6]
Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,[7]

[1] delight
[2] enjoy
[3] take such pains
[4] foolish
[5] imitate
[6] flatterer

18. Nigellus Wireker wrote the *Burnellus*, or *Speculum Stu*
twelfth century.

That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse[1] unto yow seith.
Redeth Ecclesiaste[2] of[3] flaterye;
Beth war,[4] ye lordes, of hir[5] trecherye.
This Chauntecleer stood hye upon his toos,
Streeching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,[6]
And gan to crowe loude for the nones[7];
And Daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
And by the gargat[8] hente[9] Chauntecleer,
And on his bak toward the wode him beer,[10]
For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.[11]
O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed[12]!
Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
Allas, his wyf ne roghte[13] nat of dremes!
And on a Friday fil[14] al this meschaunce.
O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Sin[15] that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy service dide al his poweer,
More for delyt, than world to multiplye,
Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?
O Gaufred,[16] dere mayster soverayn,
That, whan thy worthy King Richard was slayn
With shot, compleynedest[17] his deth so sore,
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence[18] and thy lore,
The Friday for to chyde,[19] as diden ye
(For on a Friday soothly slayn was he)?
Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne[20]
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
Was never of ladies maad whan Ilioun

1 truth
2 Ecclesiasticus 12. 10, 11, 16
3 on
4 beware
5 their
6 closed
7 for the occasion
8 throat
9 seized
10 bore
11 pursued
12 escaped
13 recked
14 happened
15 since
16 Geoffrey de Vinsauf
17 didst lament
18 judgment
19 blame
20 lament

Was wonne, and Pirrus[1] with his streite[2] swerd,
Whan he hadde hent King Priam by the berd,
And slayn him — as saith us *Eneydos* —
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,[3]
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
But sovereynly[4] Dame Pertelote shrighte,[5]
Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales[6] wyf
Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,
And that the Romayns hadde brend[7] Cartage;
She was so ful of torment and of rage
That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hirselven with a stedfast herte.
O woful hennes, right so cryden ye
As, whan that Nero brende the citee
Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,
For that hir[8] housbondes losten alle hir lyves;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wol I torne to my tale agayn.
  This sely[9] widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo;
And out at dores sterten they anoon,
And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
And cryden, 'Out[10]! harrow[11]! and weylaway!
Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they ran,
And eek with staves many another man;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges —
So were they fered[12] for berking of the dogges
And shouting of the men and wimmen eke;
They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.

[1] Pyrrhus
[2] drawn
[3] enclosure
[4] most of all
[5] shrieked
[6] General of Carthage, when it was burned
[7] burned
[8] their
[9] good
[10]
[11]
[12]

They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle[1];
The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
So hidous was the noyse, a! benedicite[2]!
Certes he, Jakke Straw,[3] and his meynee,[4]
Ne made never shoutes half so shrille
Whan that they wolden any Fleming[5] kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras thay broghten bemes,[6] and of box,[7]
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,[8]
And therwithal thay shryked and they houped,[9]
It semed as that heven sholde falle.
  Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!
Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
In al his drede, unto the fox he spak,
And seyde: 'Sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet sholde I seyn — as wis God helpe me! —
"Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
A verray pestilence upon yow falle!
Now am I come unto this wodes syde,
Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer abyde;
I wol him ete in feith, and that anon."'
The fox answerde: 'In feith, it shal be don;'
And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,[10]
And heighe upon a tree he fleigh anon.
And whan the fox saugh that he was ygon,
'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, allas!
I have to yow,' quod he, 'ydoon trespas,
Inasmuche as I maked yow aferd,

1 kill
2 bless us; *pron.* bencité
3 (in the rebellion of 1381)
4 followers
5 any Flemish merchant in London
6 trumpets
7 boxwood
8 tooted
9 whooped
10 nimbly, skilfully

Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the yerd;
But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
Com doun, and I shal telle yow what I mente;
I shal seye sooth to yow, God help me so.'
'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe[1] us bothe two,
And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones,
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
Thou shalt namore, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to singe and winke with myn yë.
For he that winketh whan he sholde see,
Al wilfully, God lat him never thee[2]!'
'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but God yeve him meschaunce
That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees!'
Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees[3]
And necligent, and truste on flaterye!
But ye that holden this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
Taketh the moralitee, good men;
For Seint Paul seith[4] that al that writen is,
To our doctryne it is ywrite, ywis.
Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.
Now, gode God, if that it be thy wille,
As seith my lord,[5] so make us alle good men,
And bringe us to his heighe blisse! Amen.

[1] curse
[2] prosper
[3] heedless
[4] 2 Tim. 3. 16
[5] the Archbishop of Canterbury, as a manuscript note explains

CHRONICLES

LAYAMON, BRUT

Our chief information concerning Layamon is derived from the first extract printed below. In the later manuscript, 'Laȝamon' is 'Laweman'; and indeed the word means 'lawman,' a kind of magistrate. 'Ernleȝe' is Ar(e)ley Regis, or King's Ar(e)ley, just south of Stourport, where the Stour joins the Severn, and about ten miles north (slightly northwest) of Worcester. 'Radestone' is Redstone, a high cliff in the neighborhood.

Layamon goes on to say that it came into his mind to relate the history of England from the beginning, and that, in order to this, he journeyed up and down the country to procure the books he needed. Though he carries his story only down to 689, it consists of some 16,120 long lines, written about 1205. His chief source was Wace's *Roman de Brut* (1205), yet the earlier manuscript of Layamon contains, according to B. S. Monroe (*Modern Philology* 4. 567), only 87 French words. In common with Wace, or rather through Wace, he is ultimately dependent on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Histories of the Kings of Britain* (before 1148), the ultimate source of so much romance dealing with 'the matter of Britain.' Geoffrey's book has been excellently translated by Sebastian Evans (Temple Classics).

Of the two manuscripts, the second may be a half century or so later than the first. Our extracts are taken from the first, as given in the standard edition, Madden's (3 vols., London, 1847), with the latter's short lines printed as long ones (but Madden's numbering is retained). For further information, see the preface to Madden's edition; the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*; *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 260–4; Monroe, *Jour. Eng. and Germ. Phil.* 7. 139–41 (bibliography).

LAYAMON'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF

Lines 1–10 (Madden 1. 1)

An preost[1] wes on leoden,[2] Laȝamon wes ihoten[3];
He wes Leovenaðes sone — liðe[4] him beo Drihten[5]!
He wonede[6] at Ernleȝe, at æðelen[7] are[8] chirechen,[9]
Uppen Sevarne staþe[10] — sel[11] þar him þuhte[12] —
On fest[13] Radestone; þer he bock radde.[14]

1 priest
2 among the people
3 named
4 merciful
5 the Lord
6 lived
7 noble
8 a
9 church
10 bank
11 good, pleasant
12 seemed
13 hard by
14 read

THE PROPHECY OF DIANA

Lines 1097–1252 (Madden I. 47–53). Cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Book I, chap. 11, and Milton's translation of it in his *History of Britain.*

Brutus nom[1] Ignogen, and into scipe lædde.
Heo[2] rihten[3] heora rapes, heo rærden[4] heora mastes,
Heo wunden up seiles; wind stod[5] an willen.[6]
Sixtene siðe[7] tuenti scipen tuhten[8] from havene,
And feower scipen greate þe weren grundladene[9]
Mid þat beste wepnen þa Brutus havede.
Heo fusden[10] from stronde ut of Griclonde[11];
Heo wenden ut i wide sæ; þa wilde[12] wurðen itemede.[13]
Tweiȝe dawes and tua niht inne sæ weren;
Þen oðer[14] dai heo comen liðen[15] on æven to londe.
Logice[16] hatte[17] þat eitlond[18]; leode[19] nere þar nane—
Ne wapmen[20] ne wifmen—buten[21] westiȝe[22] pæðes.[23]
Utlaȝen[24] hefden iræved[25] þat lond, and alle þa leoden ofslaȝen[26];
And swa hit wes al west,[27] and wnnen[28] biræved,
Ah[29] swa monie þar waren wilde deor[30] þat wnder[31] heom þuhte[32];
And þa Troinisce men tuhten to þon deoren,
And duden of þan wilden al heora iwilla.[33]
To þan scipen wælden.[34]
Heo funden i þon eitlonde ane burh[35] swiðe stronge;
Tohælde[36] weoren þe walles, weste weren hallen.
Temple heo funden þar ane, imaked of marmestæne,
Muchel and mære[37]; þe wrse[38] hit hafde to welden.[39]

1 took
2 they
3 put in order
4 raised
5 MS. ston
6 was favorable
7 times
8 departed
9 deeply laden
10 hastened
11 Greece
12 wild (men)
13 tamed
14 next
15 voyaging
16 Leogecia; position unknown
17 hight
18 eyotland (island)
19 people
20 men
21 only
22 desert
23 MS. pædes
24 outlaws
25 devastated
26 slain
27 waste
28 (of) habitations
29 but
30 animals
31 wonder
32 seemed
33 will
34 carried
35 city
36 tottering
37 glorious
38 devil
39 rule

Þerinne was an onlicnesse[1] a[2] wifmonnes liche[3];
Feier hit wes and swiðe heih[4]; an[5] are[6] hæitnesse[7] nome,
Diana wes ihaten[8]; þe deovel heo luvede.
Heo dude wndercraftes[9]; þe scucke[10] hire fulste.[11]
Heo wes quen of alle wodes þe weoxen[12] on eorðen;
A[13] þon heðene lawen me[14] heold heo for helme[15] godd.
To hire weoren iwoned[16] þa wndercreftie men;
Of þa þingen[17] þa weren to kumen heo heom wolde cuðen[18]
Mid tacnen[19] and mid swefnen,[20] þonne heo weren on slæpe.
Þe wile þeo on þan eitlonde wes folc woniende.[21]
Heo wurðeden[22] þat anlicnes; þe scucke hit[23] onfeng.[24]
  Brutus hit herde siggen[25] þurh his sæmonnen
Þe ær[26] weoren on þan londe, and þa lawen wusten.
Brutus nam twelf witiȝen,[27] þe weren his wiseste men,
And enne preost of his lawen, þa weren on þan heðen dawen[28]
(Gerion hehte þe preost; he was an hirede[29] hæh);
He ferde[30] to þere stowe[31] þar Diane inne stod.
Brutus ferde into þere temple, and þa twelfe mid him,
And lette al his folc bilæven[32] þerute.[33]
Ana scale[34] he bear an honde, al of reade golde;
Milc wes i þere scale, and win sume dale[35];
Þa milc wæs of are wite hinde, þe Brutus sceat mid his honde.
He makede bi þon weofede[36] a swiðe[37] wunsum[38] fur;
Niȝen siðen[39] he bieode[40] þat weofed, for his neode.[41]
He clepede[42] to þere levedi[43] — heo wes him on heorten leof[44];

image
in
form
majestic
by
a
heathen religion's (?)
called
sorceries
fiend
aided
grew
by
one, they
high

16 accustomed to resort
17 MS. kingen
18 tell
19 signs
20 visions
21 dwelling
22 worshiped
23 (the worship?)
24 received
25 say
26 formerly
27 prophets
28 days
29 among the people
30 proceeded

31 place
32 remain
33 outside
34 dish
35 part
36 altar
37 most
38 winsome
39 times
40 circled about
41 need
42 cried
43 lady
44 dear

Mid milden his worden he ȝirnde[1] hire mihten.
Ofte he custe[2] þat weofed mid wnsume lates[3];
He halde[4] þa milc in þat fur mid milden his worden:
'Leafdi Diana, leove Diana, heȝe Diana, help me to neode.
Wise[5] mi and witere,[6] þurh þine witful[7] craft,
Whuder Ich mæi liðan,[8] and ledan mine leoden
To ane wnsume londe, þer[9] ich mihte wunien.[10]
And ȝif Ich þat lond mai biȝeten,[11] and mi folc hit þurhgengen.[12]
Makian Ich wlle on þine nome mæren[13] ane stowe,
And Ich þe wulle huren[14] mid wrhscipe hæȝan.[15]'
Þus spec Brutus.

Seoððen[16] he nam þe hude[17] þa wæs of þare hinde;
Biforen þan wefede he heo spradde, swlc[18] he leie on bedde;
He cnelede þar ufenan,[19] and seoððen he adun læi;
Swa he gon slomnen,[20] and þeræfter to slepen.
Þa þuhte him on his swefne, þar he on slepe læi,
Þat his lavedi Diana hine leofliche[21] biheolde
Mid wnsume leahtren[22]; wel heo him bihihte,[23]
And hendiliche[24] hire hond on his heved leide,
And þus him to seide, þer he on slepe lai:
'Biȝende[25] France, i þet west, þu scalt finden a wunsum lond;
Þat lond is biurnan[26] mid þære sæ; þaron þu scalt wrþan[27] sæl.[28]
Þar is fuȝel, þar is fisc; þer wuniað feire deor;
Þar is wode, þar is water; þar is wilderne[29] muchel.
Þet lond is swiþe wunsum; weallen[30] þer beoð feire;
Wuniað in þon londe eotanes[31] swiðe stronge.
Albion hatte þat lond, ah leode ne beoð þar nane.
Þerto þu scalt teman,[32] and ane neowe Troye þar makian;

1 besought
2 kissed
3 looks
4 poured
5 guide
6 instruct
7 MS. wihtful
8 journey
9 where
10 dwell
11 obtain
12 overrun
13 noble
14 adore
15 high
16 afterward
17 hide
18 as if
19 upon
20 drowse
21 lovingly
22 laughter
23 promised
24 courteously
25 beyond
26 surrounded
27 become
28 prosperous
29 wilderness
30 wells, springs
31 giants; MS. eotan
32 repair

Þer scal of þine cunne[1] kinebearn[2] arisen,
And scal þin mære[3] kun wælden[4] þas[5] londes,
Ȝeond[6] þa weorld beon ihæȝed[7]; and þu beo hæl and isund.[8]'

THE BUILDING OF LONDON

Lines 1985–2060 (Madden 1.84–7). Cf. Geoffrey 1.17. 224 5-10 may compared with the ultimate original in Geoffrey of Monmouth, with Rob of Gloucester's version of the latter, with Wace's expansion, and with Rob of Brunne's rendering of Wace:

Geoffrey of Monmouth 1.16: 'Amœno tamen situ locorum et piscoson fluminum copia, nemoribusque præelecta.'

Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle* (ca. 1300) 484–7:

> Þo Brut and is men þus come verst to londe,
> Hii wende aboute wide inou, þe contreies vor to fonde;
> Gret plente hii founde of fiis, as hii wende bi þe weie,
> Of wodes and of rivers, as is in þe contreie.

Wace, *Brut* 1245–1250:

> Brutus esgarda les montaignes,
> Vit les valées, vit les plaignes,
> Les marines et les boscages,
> Et les éves et les rivages;
> Vit les cans et les praaries;
> Vit les tères bien gaagnies.

Robert (Manning) of Brunne (1338) 1889–1894:

> *Brutus byhel[d] þe mountaynes,*
> And avised hym o þe playnes;
> Biheld þe wodes, watres, and ffen,
> Where esyest wony[n]g were for men;
> Als watres ronnen wel, he byheld,
> And mede wiþ þe eryed feld.

Brutaine hefde Brutus, and Cornwaile Corineus.
Brutus nom alle his freond, þe[9] comen in his ferde[10];
Neh him he heom lænde,[11] for heo him leofe weoren.
Corineus him cleopede to alle his icorene[12];
Alle he heom lænde þer heom wes alre[13] leofest.

1 kin
2 royal progeny
3 illustrious
4 rule (w. gen.)
5 MS. þus
6 throughout
7 exalted
8 sound
9 that
10 army
11 placed
12 chosen on
13 of all

Weox[1] þet folk and wel iþaih,[2] for ælc hefde his iwillen[3];
Inne lut[4] ȝeren firste[5] wes þat folc swa muchel
þat þer nas nan ende of folke swiþe hende.
Brutus hine biþohte,[6] and þis folc biheold;
Biheold he þa muntes, feire and muchele;
Biheold he þa medewan þat weoren swiðe mære;
Biheold he þa wateres and þa wilde deor;
Biheold he þa fisches; biheold he þa fuȝeles;
Biheold he þa leswa[7] and þene leofliche[8] wode;
Biheold he þene wode hu he bleou[9]; biheold he þat corn hu hit greu;
Al he iseih on leoden þat him leof was on heorten.
þa biþohte he on Troyȝen,[10] þer his cun teone[11] þoleden,[12]
And he liðde[13] ȝeond þis lond, and scæwede[14] þa[15] leoden.
He funde wunsum ane stude[16] uppen ane watere;
þær he gon aræren[17] riche ane burhe,[18]
Mid bouren and mid hallen, mid hæȝe stanwalle[n].
þa þe burh wes imaked, þa wes he swiðe mære.[19]
þa burh wes swiðe wel idon, and he hire sette name on;
He ȝef hire[20] tirfulne[21] name — Troye þe Newe,
To munien[22] his ikunde[23] whone[24] he icomen weore.
Seoððen[25] þa leodene longe þerafter
Leiden adun þene[26] noma, and Trinovant heo[27] nemneden.
Binnen[28] feola[29] wintre hit iwerð[30] seoððen[31]
þat aræs of Brutus kunne — þat wes an heh king —
Lud wes ihaten.[32] þas burh he luvede swiðe;
þe king i þere burh wonede swiðe feola wintre.
He lette heo Lude clepian ȝond his leodfolke,
Hehte[33] heo nemnen Kaerlud, æfter þone kinge.

[1] grew
[2] throve
[3] will (what he desired)
[4] a few
[5] time
[6] bethought
[7] pastures
[8] lovely
[9] blew
[10] Troy
[11] evil
[12] suffered
[13] journeyed; MS. lidðe
[14] viewed
[15] MS. þea
[16] spot
[17] erect
[18] city
[19] glorious; MS. mare
[20] MS. hire to hire
[21] glorious
[22] commemorate
[23] lineage
[24] from which
[25] subsequently; MS. soððen
[26] that
[27] it
[28] within
[29] many
[30] befell
[31] MS. seodðen
[32] named
[33] commanded

Seoððen[1] com oþer tir[2] and neowe tidinde,
Þat men heo clepeden Lundin over al þas leode.
Seoððen comen Englisce men, and cleopeden heo Lundene;
Seððen[3] comen þa Frensca — þa mid fehte[4] heo biwonnen[5] —
Mid heora leodðeawe,[6] and Lundres heo hehten.[7]

THE DIVISION OF LEAR'S KINGDOM

Lines 2902–3110 (Madden 1.123–32). Cf. Geoffrey 2.11

Bladud hafde enne sune — Leir wes ihaten;
Efter his fader[8] daie he heold þis drihliche[9] lond
Somed[10] an[11] his live[12] sixti winter.
He makede ane riche burh þurh radfulle[13] his crafte,[14]
And he heo lette nemnen efter himseolvan;
Kaer Leir hehte þe burh — leof heo wes þan kinge —
Þa we an ure leodquide[15] Leirchestre[16] clepiað.
Ʒeare,[17] a þan olde[18] dawen,[19] heo wes swiðe aðel[20] burh;
And seoððen þer seh[21] toward swiðe muchel seorwe,
Þat heo wes al forfaren[22] þurh þere leodene væl.[23]
Sixti winter hefde Leir þis lond al to welden.
Þe king hefde þreo dohtren bi his drihliche quen;
Nefde he nenne sune — þerfore he warð sari —
His manscipe[24] to halden, buten[25] þa þreo dohtren.
Þa ældeste dohter haihte Gornoille, þa oðer Ragau, þa þridde
Cordoille —
Heo wes þa ȝungeste suster, a[26] wliten[27] alre vairest;
Heo wes hire fader al swa leof swa his aȝene lif.
Þa ældede[28] þe king, and wakede[29] an aðelan[30];

5. seodðen
ry
MS. sedðen
battle
won
national customs
called (it)
father's
noble
together

11 in
12 lifetime
13 prudent
14 skill
15 language
16 Leicester
17 formerly
18 MS. holde
19 days
20 noble

21 came
22 destroyed
23 slaughter
24 dignity, lordship
25 only
26 in
27 beauty
28 grew old
29 became weak
30 power

And he hine biþohte wet he don mahte
Of[1] his kineriche[2] æfter his deie.
He seide to himsulven þat þat uvel[3] wes:
'Ic wlle mine riche todon[4] allen[5] minen dohtren,
And ʒeven hem mine kineþeode,[6] and twemen[7] mine[n] bearnen,[8]
Ac ærst Ic wille fondien[9] whulche[10] heo mi beste freond,
And heo seal habbe þat beste del of mine drihlichen lon[d].'
Þus þe king þohte, and þeræfter he worhte.
He clepede Gornoille, his[11] godfulle[12] dohter,
Ut of hire bure to hire fader deore;
And þus[13] spac þe alde king, þer he on æðelen[14] seat:
'Sei me, Gornoille, soðere[15] worden:
Swiðe dure[16] þeo eart me; hu leof æm Ich þe?
Hu mochel worþ[17] levest[18] þu me to walden kineriche?'
Gornoille was swiðe wær[19] — swa beoð wifmen wel ihwær[20] —
And seide ane lesinge heore[21] fædere þon king:
'Leofe fæder dure, swa bide[22] Ich Godes are[23] —
Swa helpe me Apollin, for min ilæfe[24] is al on him —
Þat levere[25] þeo[26] ært me æne[27] þane þis world al clane[28]:
And ʒet[29] Ic þe wlle speken wit[30]: þeou ært leovere þene mi lif;
And þis Ich sucge[31] þe to soðe[32]; þu miht[33] me wel ileve.[34]'
Leir þe king ilefde his dohter[35] læisinge,
And þas ænsware ʒef — þat wæs þe olde king:
'Ich þe, Gornoille, suge,[36] leove dohter dure,
God[37] scal beon þi meda[38] for þira gretinge.
Ic eam, for mire ældde,[39] sw[i]þe unbalded,[40]

1 with
2 kingdom
3 evil
4 divide
5 MS. & allen
6 kingdom
7 apportion
8 children
9 test
10 MS. whulchere
11 MS. hes
12 goodly; MS. guð-
13 MS. þeus
14 state
15 with true
16 dear
17 MS. worȝ
18 (?); MS. leste
19 wary, cunning
20 everywhere
21 to her
22 hope for
23 mercy
24 belief
25 dearer
26 thou
27 alone
28 entire
29 yet more
30 with
31 say
32 MS. seoðe
33 mayst; MS. mith
34 believe
35 daughter's; MS. doster
36 say; MS. seuge
37 good
38 reward
39 old age
40 enfeebled

And þou me lovest[1] sw[i]þe mare þan is on live.
Ich wille mi drihliche[2] lond a þreo[3] al todalen[4];
Þin is þat beste deal; þu ært mi dohter deore,
And scalt habben to laverd min alre beste þein[5]
Þeo Ich mai vinden in mine kinnelonde.[6]'
Æfter spac þe olde kinge wit his [oþer][7] dohter:
'Leove dohter Regau, wat seist tu[8] me to ræide[9]?
Seie þu bifore mire dugden[10] heo[11] dure Ich am þe an herten.'
Þa answærde [Regau] mid rætfulle[12] worden:
'Al þat is on live nis nig[13] swa dure
Swa me is þin an lime,[14] forðe[15] min ahȝene[16] lif.'
Ah heo ne seide naþing soð,[17] no more þenne hire suste[r];
Alle hire lesinge hire vader ilefede.
Þa answarede þe king — his[18] doȝter him icwemde[19]:
'Þea þridde del of mine londe Ich bitake[20] þe an honde;
Þu scalt nime[21] loverd[22] þer þe is alre leowost.'
Þa ȝet nolde[23] þe leodking[24] his sotscipe[25] bilæven[26];
He hehte[27] cumen him biforen his dohter Gordoille.
Heo was alre ȝungest, of soðe ȝærwitelest,[28]
And þe king heo lovede more þanne ba tueie[29] þe oðre.
Cordoille iherde þa lasinge þe hire sustren seiden þon kinge;
Nom[30] hire leaffulne[31] huie[32] þat heo liȝen[33] nolden —
Hire fader heo wolde suge soð,[34] were him lef,[35] were him lað.[36]
Þeo queð þe alde king — unræd[37] him fulede[38]:
'Iheren Ich wlle of þe, Cordoille —
Swa þe helpe Appolin — hu deore þe beo lif min.'
Þa answarede Cordoille, lude[39] and no wiht stille,

1 MS. levoste
2 MS. dirh-
3 in three; MS. þroe
4 divide
5 thane
6 realm
7 second
8 thou
9 as opinion
10 men; MS. dugden
11 how
12 prudent
13 nigh
14 limb
15 before (?)
16 own
17 true; MS. seð
18 MS. hiis
19 pleased
20 deliver
21 take
22 husband
23 would not
24 king
25 folly; MS. soth-
26 abandon
27 commanded
28 most gifted
29 both (both two)
30 made up
31 faithful
32 mind (OE. *hyge*)
33 lie
34 MS. seoð
35 agreeable
36 disagreeable
37 unwisdom; MS. unrað
38 followed
39 loudly

Mid gomene[1] and mid lehtre to hire fader leve:
'þeo art me leof al so[2] mi fæder, and Ich þe al so þi do
Ich habbe to þe soþfaste[3] love, for[4] we buoð swiþe isibl
And — swa Ich ibide[6] are — Ich wille þe suge mare:
Al swa muchel þu bist worþ[7] swa þu weldende[8] aert,
And al swa muchel swa þu havest men þe wlleþ[9] luvien,
For sone he[10] bið ilaȝed,[11] þe mon þe lutel ah.[12]'
þus seide þe mæiden Cordoille, and seoððen set sw[i]þe
þa iwarðe[13] þe king wræð[14] for he nes noht[15] iquemed,
And wende on [h]is þonke[17] þat[18] hit weren for unðeaw
þat he hire weore swa unwourð þat heo hine nolde iwur
Swa hire twa sustren, þe ba somed[21] læsinge speken.
þe king Leir iwerðe[22] swa blac swlch[23] hit a blac cloð v
Iwærð his hude[24] and his heowe,[25] for he was suþe[26] ih
Mid þære wræððe he wes isweved,[28] þat[29] he feol iswow
Late[31] þeo he up fusde[32] — þat mæiden wes afeared;
þa hit alles up brac — hit wes uvel[33] þat he spac:
'Hær[c]ne,[34] Cordoille, Ich þe telle wlle[35] mine wille:
Of mine dohtren þu were me durest; nu þu eært me alre[36]
Ne scalt þu næver halden dale of mine lande,
Ah mine[n] dohtren Ich wlle delen mine riche,[38]
And þu scalt worðen wræchen,[39] and wonien in wansiðe
For navere Ich ne wende[41] þat þu me woldes þus scand
þarfore þu scalt beon dæd,[43] Ich wene; fliȝ[44] ut of min
þine sustren sculen habben mi kinelond; and þis me is

1 mirth (game)
2 as
3 true; MS. soh-
4 because
5 related
6 expect
7 worth
8 ruling; MS. velden
9 MS. wllet
10 MS. heo
11 brought low; MS. ilageð
12 possesses
13 became
14 wroth; MS. wærð
15 MS. þeo noht
16 gratified
17 thought
18 MS. þaht
19 undutifulness
20 honor
21 both together
22 grew
23 as if
24 skin
25 hue
26 much
27 grieved
28 stupefied
29 so that
30 in a swoon
31 after a time
32 started
33 evil
34 hearke
35 will
36 of all;
37 most l
38 realm
39 exile;
40 misery
41 suppo
42 shame
43 dead
44 fly
45 sight
46 agree

Þe Duc of Cornwaile scal habbe Gornoille,
And þe Scottene king Regau þat scone,[1]
And Ic hem ȝeve al þa winne[2] þe Ich æm waldinge[3] over.'
And al þe alde king dude[4] swa he hafvede[5] idemed.[6]
Of[t] wes þen[7] mæidene wa,[8] and nævre wors þenne þa[9];
Wa[10] hire wes on mode[11] for hire fader wræþe.[12]
Heo wende[13] into hire boure, þar heo ofte sætte sare,[14]
For heo nolde liȝen hire[15] fader[16] leove.

CÆSAR'S BATTLE WITH THE BRITONS

Lines 7472–7662 (Madden 1. 319–27). Cf. Geoffrey 4. 3, 4

He[17] cleopede on his cnihtes: 'Ȝarewieð[18] eow to fihte,
For nu is mid ferde[19] icumen Cassibellaunus.'
Heo liðede[20] togadere mid heore speren longe,
Mid axen, mid sweorden, mid scærpe speres orde[21];
Hardliche[22] heo heowen[23]; hælmes þer gollen[24];
Feon[d]liche[25] heo feohten; hafdes[26] þer feollen.
And Cesar þe keisere wes unimete[27] kene[28]:
His longe sweord he adroh,[29] and moni mon þermide[30] asloh[31];
He swonc[32] i þon fehte þat al he lavede[33] a sweote.[34]
He sloh þa[35] him neh[36] weoren — alle buten[37] iferen[38];
He dude þer muchelne[39] wundre; he sloh þer an hundred
Of ahtere[40] monnen, þe feond[41] mid his mæche.[42]
Þat iseh Androgeus, and cleopede his fader Nennius,

fair
possessions (?)
ruler
did
had
decided
to the
woe
then
MS. þa
heart
wrath; MS. wærþe
MS. vende
sorrowful
15 to her
16 MS. fadder
17 Cæsar
18 prepare
19 army
20 came
21 point
22 stoutly
23 hewed
24 resounded
25 fiercely
26 heads
27 beyond measure
28 brave
29 drew
30 therewith
31 MS. asloð
32 labored
33 dripped
34 sweat
35 those that
36 near
37 without
38 companions (help)
39 a great
40 valiant
41 enemy
42 sword

And beiene[1] þa eorles buȝen[2] heom togæderes,
Mid swiðe muchele folke; togæderen stoden faste.
Iseȝen[3] heo Julius Cesar fæhten al swa a wilde bar,
And heo him to fusden[4] mid ladliche[5] fehte,
And monie of heore feonden heo fælden to þon grunde
Þa iseh Nennius wær[6] fæht Cesar Julius,
And he him to rasde[7] mid ræhæm[8] his sweorde;
Uppen þene helm he hine smat þat þet sweord in bat.
Selkuð[9] hit þuhte[10] moni cnihte
Þat he durste cumen him næh, for þan þa þe keisere[11] v
Julius Cesar ne queð nan word, ah he bræid[13] ut his sv
And Nennium he smat þa uppen þene helm swa
Þat þe helm tohælde,[14] and þat hæfde[15] bledde;
Ah he ne blakede[16] no, for he wes cniht wel idon.[17]
And Julius noht ne na bræð,[18] ah his brond[19] he up ah
And Nennius hæf up his sceld, scilde[21] hine sulve.
Julius adun smat,[22] and þat sweord a[23] ðene scelde bat
Julius hit wraste,[25] and þat sweord stike[de][26] feste;
Julius þat sweord heold, and Nennius þene sceld,
And þus heo hit longe bituȝen,[27] ne mihte he þat sweorc
Þat isæh Androgeus hu verden[29] Cesar and Nennius,
And he[30] hem to fusde, Nennius[31] to fulste.[32]
Þa isæh Cesar tiðend[33] þat him wes sær;
He forlette[34] þene brand — þa nefde he noht on his hc
And he þa feondliche[35] turnde to flæme.[36]
Nennius wende i þane felde, and he turnde his scelde,
Droh ut þene brande. Þa wes þe eorl swiþe bald:

1 both
2 turned
3 saw
4 hurried
5 hostile
6 where
7 rushed
8 fierce
9 strange
10 MS. þuðte
11 emperor
12 awe-inspiring
13 drew
14 gave way
15 head
16 paled
17 trained
18 paused for breath (?); but the text is probably corrupt. (The later MS. has: mid þe seolve breþ.)
19 sword
20 lifted
21 shielded
22 smote
23 in
24 bit

Monie Romanisce men mid þon sweorde he leide adun;
He wes moni[1] monnes bone,[2] and moni anne[3] he dude scome.
Al þat he mid þan sweorde smat, þerriht[4] hit[5] iwat[6];
Al þat he þermid[7] atran,[8] weore hit flæs,[9] weore hit ban,
Þurh þeos sweordes wunde heo fullen to þon grunde.
Alle dæi wes þat fiht,[10] a[11] þet com þe þestere[12] niht.
Julius þe kaisere mid alle þan Romanisce here
Dalden[13] from þan fihte al bi þustere nihte;
To hærberȝe[14] heo wenden uppen þare sæ stronde;
Heo bilefden[15] biæften[16] twenti hundred cnihten
Þeo leien under scelden, islæȝen ȝeond þon felden.
Cesar iwende to his bedde; his men weoren ofdredde.[17]
Hine[18] biwakeden[19] in þere nihte þritti hundred cnihten,
Mid helmen and mid burnen,[20] and mid stelene sweorden.
Julius Cesar he wes ȝep[21] and swuðe iwær[22];
He isæh his muchele lure,[23] and of mare[24] he hæfde kare;
He aras to þan midnihte, and bannede[25] his cnihtes,
And seide heom þat heo wolden faren and fleon of þissen londe,
Faren into Flandre, and beo[n] þer wuniende
A[26] þat he iseȝe[27] his time þat heo[28] mihten æft cumen liðen.[29]
Heo ferden forþ[30] rihte to scipe al bi nihte;
Heo hæfden swiðe fair weder, and wenden into Flandre.
A marȝen, þa hit dæi wes, þe king mid his duȝeðe[31]
Ȝarekede[32] his ferde, and wende to þan fihte.
Þo[33] was Romanisce folc ivaren[34] from here londe,[35]
Þat[36] ne funden heo naver enne[37] of Cesares monnen.

[1] MS. moniennes
[2] slayer
[3] a one
[4] straightway
[5] it (= they)
[6] died
[7] therewith
[8] reached, touched
[9] flesh
[10] MS. fehti
[11] till
[12] dark
[13] departed
[14] shelter, harborage
[15] left
[16] behind
[17] dismayed
[18] him; MS. inne
[19] wakened
[20] cuirasses
[21] astute
[22] wary
[23] loss
[24] more, further; MS. mære
[25] summoned
[26] until
[27] should see; MS. iseȝen
[28] MS. he
[29] sailing
[30] MS. forh
[31] knighthood
[32] made ready
[33] MS. þeo
[34] passed
[35] MS. sonde
[36] so that
[37] one

Þa weoren Bruttes bliðe[1] an heore mode;
Muchel wes þa blisse þat heo makeden mid iwisse,[2]
And[3] sone þeræfter særi heo wurden.[4]
And Cassibellaune þe king iwarð særi þurh alle þing,[5]
For Nennius his broðer ne mihte finden bote[6]
Of his hæfved-wunde þe Julius smat mid honde,
Ne þurh nenne læchecræfte[7] ne mihte he lif habben.
Nes þer nan oðer ræd[8] buten Nennius iwarð dæd,[9]
And Nennius was ilæid[10] at þon norðȝæte i Lundene.
Þe king næm enne marmestan, and lette hine mid golde bigon,[11]
Mid golde and mid ȝimme[12]; his broðer he leide þerinne;
Mid richedome[13] þa Bruttes Nennium biburden.[14]
Nu þu miht[15] iheren selkuð[16] word: þe king nom þat ilke[17] sweord
Þat Nennius his broðer biwan of Julius Cesare,
And læide hit bi his broðer, þah[18] hit his bone[19] weore.
Wæs þe stelene brond swiðe brad and swiðe long;
Þeron weoren igraven feole cunne[20] bocstaven[21];
A[22] ðere hilte wes igraven
Þat þa sweord wes icleoped[23] inne Rome *Crocia Mors*[24] —
Swa þat sweord hæhte, for hit havede muchele mahte.[25]
Þermide þe keisere þrætede[26] ælches londes here[27];
For nas nævere þe ilke bern[28] þe avere iboren weore,
Þat of þen ilke sweorde enne[29] swipe[30] hefde,
Þat[31] he of his likame[32] lette ænne drope blod,
Þat he nes sone dæd, neore he noht[33] swa dohti.
Julius mid his ferde læi inne Flandre;
Þa word com to France hou[34] he ivaren hæfde,

[1] joyful
[2] with certainty, in truth
[3] but
[4] MS. wurðen
[5] in every way
[6] cure
[7] medical skill
[8] remedy
[9] MS. dæð
[10] laid
[11] adorn
[12] precious stone(s)
[13] splendor
[14] buried
[15] mayst
[16] strange
[17] very
[18] though; MS. þat
[19] slayer
[20] kinds
[21] letters (cf. Ger. *Buchstaben*)
[22] on; MS. æ
[23] called
[24] Saffron Death
[25] might
[26] menace
[27] army
[28] man
[29] a
[30] blow
[31] so that
[32] body
[33] never
[34] MS. he

And hu he wæs mid his færde iflæmde[1] of þissen earde.[2]
Þa[3] weoren þa Frensce men þerfore swiþe væine,[4]
For toward Julius heo hæfden grome,[5] and forþi weoren fæin of his scome.[6]

CYMBELINE AND THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Lines 9064–9185 (Madden 1.386–91). Cf. Geoffrey 4.11

On Kinbelines dæie, þe king wes inne Bruttene,
Com a þissen middelærde[7] anes maidenes Sune;
Iboren wes in Beðleem of bezste[8] alre burden.[9]
He is ihaten Jesu Crist þurh þene Halie Gost,
Alre worulde Wunne,[10] Walden[d][11] englenne.[12]
Fæder he is on hevenen, Frovre[13] moncunnes[14];
Sune he is on eorðen of sele[15] þon mæidene;
And þene Halie Gost haldeð[16] mid himseolven.
Þene Gast he wel daleð[17] to þan þe him beoð leove,
Al swa he dude Peture, þe wes a wræche[18] fiscære,
Þe makede hine an mancunne hehst[19] of alre manne.
Kinbelin, Bruttene king, wes god mon þurh alle þing;
And he luvede[20] here twa and twenti ȝere.
An his dæie her luvede a mon inne þisse leoden —
Feorliche[21] þing fuleden[22] him — he wes ihaten Teilesin[23];
Heo heolden[24] hine for witie[25] þurh his witfulne[26] cræfte,
And al heo hit ilæfden[27] þat Teilesin heom seide.
He seide heom seolkuð[28] inoh, and al heo hit funden soð;
He seide heom ælche ȝere wæt heom to cumen weore.
Þe king him sende æfter wise twalf cnihtes,
Bad[29] hine comen him[30] to — þat he nan oðer[31] scolde[32] don:

[1] put to flight
[2] country
[3] MS. þat
[4] fain, glad
[5] grudge
[6] shame
[7] world
[8] the best
[9] women
[10] joy
[11] lord
[12] of angels
[13] comfort
[14] of mankind
[15] blissful
[16] he holdeth
[17] imparts
[18] forlorn
[19] highest
[20] lived
[21] wondrous
[22] followed
[23] Taliesin
[24] held: MS. heolten
[25] prophet
[26] wise
[27] believed
[28] marvel
[29] bade; MS. bað
[30] Cymbeline
[31] other thing
[32] should; MS. seolden

And heo hine bro[h]ten sone biforen þen folkekinge.
Anan swa[1] þe king hine imette, fæire he hine igrette:
'Swa me helpen min hefde and mi chin, wulcume ært þu, Teilesin,
And leovere me is þine isunden[2] þenne a þusend punden.'
þa andswerede Teilesin, and þus seide to Kinbelin:
'Swa ich mote gode iþeon,[3] al[4] þu hit[5] sælt[6] wel biteon.[7]'
þa wes glad Kinbelin, and þus seide to Teilesin:
'Her beoð to þisse londe icumen seolcuðe leodronen,[8]
And fromward[9] þeon[10] londe of Jerusalem; iwurden[11] heo beoð in Beðleem.
þer is iboren an luttel child inne þere leoden.[12]
Muchele is and stor[13] þe eiȝe[14]; tacnen[15] þer beoð on sterren,
An monen, and on seonnen[16]; eie[17] is on moncunnen.
þis is widen[18] icuð[19] and þa writen[20] me beoð to icume,
And Ic wolde iwiten æt[21] þe — þu ært mi wine[22] deore —
To whan[23] þis tocne wule ten,[24] to wulche þinge temen,[25]
For herfore[26] is alches londes folc lædliche[27] afered.'
þa answerede Teilesin, and þus seide to Kinbelin:
'Hit wes ȝare[28] iqueðen[29] — þa quides[30] beoð nu soðe —
þat scolden beon a child iboren, of alle folke icoren,[31]
And þat scolde beon ihaten Hælend,[32] and helpen his freondes,
Alesen[33] his leofve wines of læðe[34] heore bendes,[35]
Of[36] helle bringen Adam, Noe, and Abraham,
Sadoc and Samiel, and Symeon þene alde,
Josep an[d] Benjamin, and alle his broðeres mid him,
Johel and Eliseon, Asor and Naason,
Ysaac and his broðer, and moni enne[37] oðer,

1 the moment that
2 health, welfare
3 well thrive
4 everything
5 refers to *al*
6 shalt
7 accomplish
8 secret tidings
9 from; MS. -warð
10 the
11 come to pass; MS. iwurðen
12 country
13 mighty, overwhelming
14 alarm, misgiving
15 signs
16 sun
17 fear
18 widely
19 known
20 writings
21 know from
22 friend
23 which
24 tend
25 lead
26 on account of this
27 sore
28 long ago
29 announced
30 assertions
31 choicest
32 Saviour, Jesus
33 deliver
34 hateful
35 bonds
36 from
37 a one

Moni hundred þusend þe iþud[1] beoð to hellen:
And for swulchere[2] neode he is icumen to þere þeoden.[3]'
Þeos word seide Teilesin, and alle heo weoren soðe.
Þa þan[4] kinge weoren[5] icudde þas quides þa weoren soðe,
Þa weoren þa tiðinde cuðe ȝeond his kineriche;
Buttes herof ȝemden,[6] and noht hit ne forȝeten.
Kinbelin wes god king, and griðful[7] þurh alle þing,[8]
And þa Romleoden[9] swiðe hine luveden;
And ȝif þe king wolde[10] wið[11] heom wiðerhalden,[12]
He mihte[13] æthalden[14] heore feoh[15] þe Julius her[16] fætte[17];
Ah ævere marc[18] bi[19] his live he hit heom leofliche[20] ȝeaf.
Seoððe[21] him comen þæ tiðinde of Crist, Godes childe,
Ne leovede[22] þe king mare buten ten ȝere:
Seoððen þe king bilæfden[23] his lif; inne Eowverwike[24] he ȝet lið.[25]

THE OLD ENGLISH CHRONICLE: THE REIGN OF STEPHEN (A.D. 1137)

The *Old English Chronicle* is of priceless value for the early history of England. Toward the end the language passes over into an early form of Middle English. Modern historians have often drawn upon this passage in characterizing the reign of Stephen.

Our text is from *Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ed. Plummer and Earle, pp. 263–5, with contractions expanded.

Þa-þe[26] King Stephne to Englalande com, þa macod he his gadering[27] æt Oxeneford, and þar he nam þe biscop Roger of Sereberi,[28] and Alexander, Biscop of Lincol, and te Canceler Roger, hise neves,[29] and dide ælle in prisun til hi iafen[30] up here castles. Þa the suikes[31]

1 consigned
2 such
3 peoples
4 to the
5 MS. wes
6 took note
7 peaceable
8 in all ways
9 Romans
10 had wished
11 against
12 rebel; MS. -heolden
13 might have; MS. miðte
14 withhold
15 tribute
16 from here
17 fetched
18 MS. mære
19 during
20 submissively, loyally
21 after
22 lived
23 departed
24 York
25 lies
26 when
27 assembly
28 Salisbury
29 nephews
30 gave
31 traitors

undergæton[1] ðat he milde man was and softe and god, and na justise ne dide, þa diden hi alle wunder. Hi hadden him manred[2] maked and athes suoren, ac[3] hi nan treuthe ne heolden; alle hi[4] wæron forsworen and here treothes forloren, for ævric[5] rice man his castles makede and agænes him heolden, and fylden þe land ful of castles. Hi swuncten[6] suyðe þe wrecce men of þe land mid castelweorces.[7] Þa þe castles waren maked, þa fylden hi [hi] mid deovles and yvele men. Þa namen hi þa men þe hi wenden ðat ani god[8] hefden, bathe be nihtes and be dæies, carlmen[9] and wimmen, and diden heom in prisun, efter[10] gold and sylver, and pined[11] heom untellendlice[12] pining. For ne wæren nævre nan martyrs swa pined alse hi wæron; me[13] henged up bi the fet and smoked heom mid ful[14] smoke; me henged bi the þumbes other bi the hefed,[15] and hengen bryniges[16] on her fet; me dide cnotted strenges abuton here hæved, and wrythen[17] to ðat it gæde[18] to þe hærnes.[19] Hi dyden heom in quarterne,[20] þar nadres[21] and snakes and pades[22] wæron inne, and drapen[23] heom swa. Sume hi diden in crucethus,[24] ðat is in an cæste[25] þat was scort and nareu and undep, and dide scærpe stanes þerinne, and þrengde[26] þe man þærinne ðat him bræcon alle þe limes. In mani of þe castles wæron lof[27] and grin,[28] ðat wæron rachenteges[29] ðat twa oþer thre men hadden onoh to bæron onne[30]; þat was sua maced, ðat is fæstned to an beom,[31] and diden an scærp iren abuton þe[32] mannes throte and his hals,[33] ðat he ne myhte nowiderwardes,[34] ne sitten ne lien ne slepen, oc bæron al ðat iren. Mani þusen[d] hi drapen mid hungær.

I ne can ne I ne mai tellen alle þe wunder, ne alle þe pines, ðat hi diden wrecce men on þis land; and ðat lastede þa xix wintre wile Stephne was king, and ævre it was werse and werse. Hi læiden

1 understood, perceived
2 homage
3 but
4 MS. he
5 every
6 oppressed
7 the making of castles
8 property
9 men
10 in pursuit of
11 tortured
12 unspeakable
13 they
14 foul
15 head
16 coats of mail
17 twisted
18 till it went
19 brain
20 prison
21 adders
22 toads
23 killed
24 torture-box
25 chest
26 pressed, jammed
27 device (?)
28 contrivance
29 chains, fetters
30 one
31 beam, rafter
32 MS. þa
33 neck
34 (go) in no direction

gældes[1] on the tunes ævre um wile,[2] and clepeden it tenseric.[3] Þa þe wrecce men ne hadden nan more to gyven, þa ræveden[4] hi and brendon[5] alle the tunes, ðat,[6] wel[7] þu myhtes faren all a dæis fare,[8] sculdest thu nevre finden man in tune sittende ne land tiled.[9] Þa was corn dære,[10] and flesc[11] and cæse[12] and butere, for nan ne wæs o þe land. Wrecce men sturven[13] of hungær; sume ieden[14] on ælmes þe waren sum wile[15] rice men; sume flugen[16] ut of lande. Wes nævre gæt mare wreccehed[17] on land, ne nævre hethen men werse ne diden þan hi diden; for ower[18] sithon[19] ne forbaren[20] hi nouther circe[21] ne cyrceiærd,[22] oc namen al þe god ðat þarinne was, and brenden sythen þe cyrce, and al tegædere. Ne hi ne forbaren biscopes land, ne abbotes, ne preostes, ac ræveden munekes and clerekes, and ævric man other[23] þe ower[24] myhte. Gif twa men oþer iii a coman ridend to an tun, al þe tunscipe flugæn for heom; wenden ðat hi wæron ræveres.[25] Þe biscopes and lered men heom cursede[26] ævre, oc was heom naht þarof, for hi weron al forcursæd and forsuoren and forloren. Warsæ[27] me tilede, þe erthe ne bar nan corn, for þe land was al fordon mid suilce dædes, and hi sæden openlice ðat Crist slep and his halechen.[28] Suilc and mare þanne we cunnen sæin, we þoleden[29] xix wintre for ure sinnes.

BARBOUR, THE BRUCE

The *Bruce* was composed in 1375 by a northern contemporary of Chaucer, John Barbour (1320 (?)–1395), who was for thirty-eight years archdeacon of Aberdeen. Of Barbour's life comparatively little is known, but we learn that he received permits from the king to study at Oxford and in France, and was granted various pensions. Besides the *Bruce*, he wrote a poem called *The Brut*, and a genealogy of the Stuart family, both of which are lost.

[1] tributes; MS. gæildes
[2] from time to time
[3] name given to a tax exacted from vassals in return for protection
[4] plundered
[5] burned
[6] so that
[7] though
[8] journey
[9] tilled
[10] dear, expensive
[11] MS. flec
[12] cheese
[13] died, perished
[14] went, lived
[15] at one time
[16] fled
[17] wretchedness
[18] everywhere; MS. ouer
[19] afterwards
[20] abstained from
[21] church
[22] churchyard
[23] each man his neighbor
[24] anywhere; MS. ouer
[25] robbers
[26] excommunicated
[27] wheresoever
[28] saints
[29] endured; MS. þolenden

The *Bruce* is called by its author a romance, though it has often been dealt with and criticized as history. 'We are hardly to regard it in the light of an exact history, but rather as a succession of episodes telling us various stories about the great perils and adventures of the heroes, the chief of whom are Robert Bruce, his brother Edward, Sir James Douglas, and Sir Thomas Randolph, afterwards Earl of Murray' (Skeat), the period covered being 1286–1332. The poem is divided into twenty books, and is written in the dialect of southern Scotland. While certain parts of it are undeniably tedious, it is of real interest for its national spirit, and has been influential upon so late a fellow-countryman of Barbour's as Sir Walter Scott. Barbour's unique position is that 'of being the father both of vernacular Scottish poetry and Scottish history' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*).

Our text is taken from that of Skeat, as edited for the Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh, 1894), with the omission of square brackets, substitution of *s* for *ss* (representing a single sound), and writing of *n̄* as *n*, etc. Skeat's text is based on the Edinburgh manuscript, written in 1489, collated with the Cambridge MS. G. 23, and with several early editions. Our selections include lines 353–406 of Book 1, 352–452 of Book 10, and 18–49, 139–66, and 272–323 of Book 13. It is to be noted that *v* and *w* are frequently interchanged.

SIR JAMES DOUGLAS

To Sanct Androws he come in hy,[1]
Quhar[2] the byschop full curtasly
Resavyt him, and gert[3] him wer
His knyvys,[4] forouch[5] him to scher[6];
And cled him rycht honorabilly,
And gert ordayn quhar he suld ly.
A weile[7] gret quhile thar duellyt he;
All men lufyt him for his bounte,
For he wes off full fayr effer,[8]
Wys, curtais, and deboner;
Larg[9] and luffand als wes he,
And our[10] all thing luffyt lawte.[11]
Leaute to luff[12] is gretumly[13]:
Throuch leaute liffis men rychtwisly;

[1] haste
[2] where
[3] made
[4] knives, daggers
[5] before
[6] carve at table
[7] very (well)
[8] behavior
[9] generous
[10] over, above
[11] loyalty
[12] to be loved
[13] greatly

With a wertu[1] of leaute
A man may ȝeit sufficyand be;
And but[2] leawte may nane haiff price,[3]
Quhethir he be wycht[4] or he be wys;
For quhar it failȝeys, na wertu
May be off[5] price, na off valu,
To mak a man sa gud that he
May symply gud man callyt be.
He wes in all his dedis lele[6];
For him dedeynȝeit[7] nocht to dele
With trechery, na with falset.[8]
His hart on hey honour wes set;
And hym contenyt[9] on sic[10] maner
That all him luffyt that war him ner.
 Bot he wes nocht sa fayr that we
Suld spek gretly off his beaute:
In wysage wes he sumdeill gray,
And had blak har, as Ic hard say;
Bot off lymmys he wes weill maid,
With banys[11] gret and schuldrys braid.
His body wes weyll maid and lenye,[12]
As thai that saw hym said to me.
Quhen he wes blyth, he wes lufly,
And meyk and sweyt in cumpany;
Bot quha in battaill mycht him se,
All othir contenance had he.
And in spek[13] wlispyt[14] he sum deill,
Bot that sat[15] him rycht wondre weill.
Till[16] gud Ector of Troy mycht he
In mony thingis liknyt be.
Ector had blak har as he had,

[4] vigorous
[5] of
[6] leal, loyal

[7] deigned
[8] falschood
[9] he demeaned himself
[10] such
[11] bones
[12] lean, thin

[13] speech
[14] lisped
[15] became
[16] to

And stark[1] lymmys, and rycht weill maid;
And wlispyt alsua as did he,
And wes fullfillyt[2] of leawte,
And wes curtais, and wys, and wycht.[3]
Bot off manheid and mekill mycht,
Till Ector dar I nane comper
Off all that evir in warldys wer.
The quhethyr[4] in his tyme sa wrocht he,
That he suld gretly lovyt be.

THE WINNING OF ROXBURGH CASTLE

This tym that the gud erll Thomas
Assegit,[5] as the lettir[6] sais,
Edinburgh, James of Douglas
Set all his vit for till purchas[7]
How Roxburgh, throu subtilite
Or ony craft, mycht wonnyn be;
Till he gert Sym of the Ledows—
A crafty man and a curious—
Of hempyn rapis[8] ledderis ma,[9]
With treyn[10] steppis bundin swa,
That vald[11] brek apon na kyn wis.[12]
A cruk[13] thai maid, at thair deuis,[14]
Of irn,[15] that wes styth[16] and square;
That, fra[17] it ane kyrnaill[18] ware,
And the leddir tharfra stratly[19]
Strekit,[20] it suld stand sekirly.[21]
This lord of Douglas than, alsoyn[22]
As this devisit wes and done,

1 strong
2 filled full
3 brave
4 nevertheless
5 besieged
6 written account
7 devise, contrive
8 ropes
9 make
10 wooden
11 would
12 in no way
13 large hook
14 according to their plan
15 iron
16 strong
17 from the time that, when
18 against a battlement
19 tightly
20 stretched
21 securely
22 as soon

Gaderit gud men in prevate[1];
Thre score I trow at[2] thai mycht be.
And on the fasteryn evyn[3] rycht,
In the begynnyng of the nycht,
Till the castell thai tuk the vay.
With blak froggis[4] all helit[5] thai
The armouris at thai on thame had.
Thai com ner by thar but abaid,[6]
And send haly thair hors[7] thame fra,
And on range[8] in ane rod[9] can[10] ga[11]
On handis and feit, quhen thai war neir,
Richt as thai ky[12] and oxin weir,
That war unbondyn left therout.
It wes richt merk,[13] forouten[14] dout;
The quhethir[15] ane, on the wall that lay,
Besyde him till his feir[16] can say:
'This man thinkis to mak gude chere'—
And nemmyt[17] ane husband[18] tharby neir—
'That has left all his oxyne out.'
The tothir said, 'It is na dout;
He sall mak merye this nycht, thouch thai[19]
Be with[20] the Douglas led avay.'
Thai wende the Douglas and his men
Had beyn oxyne, for thai ȝeid[21] then
On handis and feit, ay ane and ane.
The Dowglas rycht gud tent[22] has tane[23]
Till all thar speke,[24] bot alssoyn[25] thai
Held, carpand,[26] inward on thar way.
The Douglas men tharof wes blith,

1 secrecy
2 that
3 eve of the fast, Shrove Tuesday
4 frocks
5 covered, concealed
6 without delay
7 sent all their horses away
8 in single file
9 along a path (road)
10 did (gan)
11 go
12 cows
13 dark
14 without
15 nevertheless
16 companion (OE. *geféra*)
17 named
18 husbandman, farmer
19 (the cattle)
20 by
21 went (OE. *ȝode*)
22 attention
23 paid (taken)
24 speech
25 very soon
26 talking

And till the wall thai sped thame swith[1];
And soyn has up thair ledderis set,
That maid a clap,[2] quhen the cleket[3]
Wes festnyt fast in the kyrnell.
That herd ane of the vachis[4] wele,
And buskit[5] thiddirward but baid[6];
Bot Ledous, that the leddyr maid,
Sped[7] hym to clym first to the wall;
Bot, or he wes up gottin all,
He at[8] that vard[9] had in keping,
Met him rycht at the upcummyng;
And, for[10] he thoucht to dyng[11] hym doune,
He maid na noys, na cry, na sowne,
Bot schot[12] till him deliverly.[13]
And he that wes in juperdy
Till de,[14] a lans[15] till him he maid,
And gat him be the nek but baid,
And stekit[16] him upward vith ane knyff,
Quhill in his hand he left the liff.[17]
And quhen he ded sa saw him ly,
Upon the wall he went in hy,
And doune the body kest thame till,
And said: 'All gangis[18] as we will;
Speid[19] ȝow upward deliverly.'
And thai did swa in full gret hy.
Bot, or thai wan[20] up, thar com ane,
And saw Ledows stand him allane,
And knew he wes nocht of thar men.
In hy he ruschit till hym then,
And hym assalȝeit sturdely;
Bot he hym slew deliverly;

1 quickly
2 noise
3 clicket, holdfast
4 watches, guards
5 hastened
6 without delay
7 hastened
8 that
9 watch
10 because
11 throw
12 shot, dashed
13 nimbly
14 to die
15 leap, dash
16 stabbed
17 life
18 goes
19 hasten
20 succeeded in gettir

For he wes armyt and wes vycht.
The tothir nakyt[1] wes, I hicht,[2]
And had nocht for till stynt no strak.[3]
Sic melle[4] tharup[5] can he mak,
Quhill Douglas and his menȝhe[6] all
War wonnyn up apon the wall.
Than in the tour thai vent in hy.
The folk that tym wes halely[7]
Into[8] the hall at thair dansyng,
Synging, and othir wayis playing,
As apon fastryn evyn is
The custom, to mak joy and blis,
To folk that ar into savite[9];
Swa trowit thai that tym to be.
Bot, or thai wist, rycht in the hall
Douglas and his men cummyn var all,
And cryit on hicht[10]: 'Douglas! Douglas!'
And thai, that ma[11] war than he was,
Herd 'Dowglas!' cryit rycht hydwisly,[12]
Thai war abasit[13] for the cry,
And schupe[14] richt na defens to ma.[15]
And thai but[16] pite can thame sla,
Till thai had gottyn the ovir[17] hand.

[1] unarmed
[2] assure you
[3] to oppose a blow (stop a stroke)
[4] such combat
[5] up there
[6] host
[7] all of them
[8] in
[9] in safety
[10] aloud
[11] more
[12] horribly
[13] dismayed
[14] attempted
[15] make
[16] without
[17] upper

THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN (A.D. 1314)

The closing incident of this selection may be compared with Scott's adaptation of it in *The Lord of the Isles* 6. 31–2. The story of the campaign, with a survey of the related events and conditions, has been told by W. M. Mackenzie, *The Battle of Bannockburn: A Study in Mediæval Warfare* (Glasgow, 1913).

The battale thair so felloune[1] was,
And sua richt gret spilling of blud,
That on the erd the flus[2] it stud.
The Scottis men so weill thame bar,
And sua gret slauchtir maid thai thar,
And fra so feill[3] the livis revit,[4]
That all the feild wes bludy levit.[5]
That tym thir thre battalis[6] wer
All syde be syde fechtand[7] weill neir,
Thar mycht man her[8] richt mony dynt,
And vapnys[9] apon armour stynt,[10]
And se tummyll[11] knychtis and stedis,
With mony rich and ryoll[12] wedis[13]
Defoulit roydly[14] under feit.
Sum held on loft,[15] sum tynt[16] the suet.[17]
A long quhill thus fechtand thai wer,
That men no noyis na cry mycht her;
Men herd nocht ellis bot granys[18] and dyntis,
That slew[19] fire, as men dois[20] on flyntis;
Sa[21] faucht thai ilkane egirly
That thai maid nouthir noyis no cry,
Bot dang[22] on othir at thar mycht,
With wapnys that war burnyst brycht.
The arrowis als so thik thai flaw

[1] cruel
[2] pool
[3] many
[4] took away
[5] left
[6] these three battalions
[7] being fought
[8] hear
[9] weapons
[10] clash, smite
[11] tumble, fall
[12] royal
[13] garments
[14] rudely
[15] aloft
[16] lost
[17] life-blood (sweat)
[18] groans
[19] struck
[20] do
[21] so
[22] struck

That thai mycht say weill, at[1] thaim saw,
That thai ane hydwis schour[2] can ma;
For quhar thai fell, I wndirta,[3]
Thai left eftir thame taknyng,[4]
That sall neid, as I trow, lechyng.[5]
The Ynglis archeris schot so fast
That, mycht thar schot haf had last,[6]
It had beyne hard to Scottis men. . . .
For quhen the Scottis ynkirly[7]
Saw thair fais sa sturdely
Stand into[8] battale thame agane,
With all thar mycht and all thar mayne
Thai layd on, as men out of wit;
For quhar thai with full strak[9] mycht hit,
Thair mycht no armyng[10] stynt thar strak;
Thai tofruschit[11] thame thai mycht ourtak,[12]
And with axis sic duschis[13] gaff
That thai helmys and hedis claff.
And thair fais richt hardely
Met thame, and dang[14] on douchtely[15]
With wapnys that war stith[16] of steill.
Thar wes the battell strikyn[17] weill;
So gret dynnyng ther wes of dyntis,
As wapnys apon armor styntis,
And of speris so gret bristing,[18]
With sic thrawing[19] and sic thristing,[20]
Sic gyrnyng,[21] granyng,[22] and so gret
A noyis, as thai can othir bet,[23]
And cryit ensengeis[24] on everilk syd,
Gifand and takand woundis wyd,

[1] that
[2] shower
[3] assert
[4] token
[5] healing
[6] lasted
[7] in particular, for their part
[8] in
[9] stroke
[10] armor
[11] crushed
[12] overtake
[13] severe blows
[14] struck
[15] valiantly
[16] strong
[17] engaged
[18] breaking, bursting
[19] throwing
[20] thrusting
[21] grinning
[22] groaning
[23] beat
[24] war-cries

That it wes hydwiss for till her
All four the battelis,[1] wicht that wer,
Fechtand intill a front haly.[2]
Almychty God! full douchtely
Schir Edward the Brys and his men
Amang thair fais[3] contenyt thame[4] then. . .
For all the Scottis men that war thar,
Quhen thai saw thame[5] eschew the ficht,
Dang on thame swa with all thar mycht
That thai scalit[6] in tropellis[7] ser,[8]
And till discumfitur war ner;
And sum of thame fled all planly.[9]
Bot thai that wicht war and hardy,
That schame letit[10] till ta[11] the flicht,
At gret myschef mantenyt[12] the ficht,
And stithly in the stour[13] can stand.
And quhen the king of Ingland
Saw his men fle in syndry[14] place,
And saw his fais rout,[15] that was
Worthyn[16] so wicht and so hardy,
That all his folk war halely[17]
Swa stonayit[18] that thai had no mycht
To stynt[19] thair fais in the ficht,
He was abasit[20] so gretumly[21]
That he and all his cumpany,
Fif hundreth armyt weill at rycht,
Intill a frusche[22] all tuk the flycht,
And till the castell held ther way.
And ȝeit, as I herd sum men say,
That of Wallanch Schir Amer,[23]

1 battalions
2 abreast, all in one rank (?)
3 foes
4 demeaned themselves
5 the English
6 dispersed
7 small companies
8 separate
9 openly
10 prevented
11 from taking
12 maintained
13 combat, battle
14 sundry
15 host
16 become
17 entirely
18 astonished, dismayed
19 stop, check
20 cast down, discouraged
21 greatly, extremely
22 rush, sudden breaking of ranks
23 Sir Aymer de Valence

Quhen he the feld saw vencust[1] ner,
By the renȝe[2] led avay the king,
Agane his will, fra the fichting.
And quhen Schir Gelis de Argente[3]
Saw the king thus, and his menȝe,
Schape thame[4] to fle so spedely,
He com richt to the kyng in hy,
And said: 'Schir, sen that it is swa
That ȝe thusgat[5] ȝour gat[6] will ga,
Haffis[7] gud day! for agane[8] will I;
Ȝheit fled I nevir sekirly:
And I cheis heir to byde and de,
Than till lif heir and schamfully fle.'
His brydill than but mair abaid[9]
He turnyt, and agane he raid,
And on Schir Eduard the Brysis[10] rout
That wes so sturdy and so stout,
As dreid of na kyn thing[11] had he,
He prikit,[12] cryand 'Argente!'
And thai with speris swa him met,
And swa feill speris on hym set,
That he and hors war chargit[13] swa
That bath doune to the erd can ga;
And in that place than slayne wes he.
Of his ded wes rycht gret pite;
He wes the thrid best knycht, perfay,
That men wist liffand in his day;
He did mony a fair journe.[14]

[1] vanquished
[2] rein
[3] Giles de Argentine
[4] prepare themselves
[5] thus
[6] way
[7] have
[8] (turn) back again
[9] without more delay
[10] Bruce's
[11] no sort of thing
[12] rode hard
[13] pressed hard
[14] day's fighting

26. thrid: the other two named by Lord Hailes (*Ann. Scot.* 2. 48) are the Emperor Henry of Luxembourg and Robert Bruce.

STORIES OF TRAVEL

SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE

The work which passes under the name of Sir John Mandeville was probably the production of a certain Jean de Bourgogne, called the Bearded, who died at Liège on November 17, 1372. According to the chronicle composed by Jean d'Outremeuse (1338–1399), this Jean de Bourgogne styled himself in his will Jean de Mandeville, and revealed on his deathbed to the chronicler that, having had the misfortune to kill an earl in his own country, England, he had bound himself to traverse three parts of the world. His tomb was to be seen at Liège t 1798, with an inscription which ran (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* 36.26): 'Hic jacet vir nob lis Dom. Joannes de Mandeville, alias dictus ad Barbam, Miles, Dominus d Campdi, natus de Anglia, medicinæ professor, devotissimus orator, et bonorun suorum largissimus pauperibus erogator, qui, toto quasi orbe lustrato, Leodi diem vitæ suæ clausit extremum, A.D. MCCCLXXII, mensis Nov. die XVII.'

Whatever traveling Mandeville (or Bourgogne) may have done, almost his whole work is a tissue of borrowings and adaptations from such writings as William of Boldensele's *Itinerary* (published 1336), Odoric of Pordenone's *Itinerary* (1330), Hetoun the Armenian's *History of the Orient* (1307), the so-called *Epistle of Prester John*, etc. The work was first written in French, and afterwards translated into English, Latin, and a variety of other languages.

Dr. Warner says (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* 36.28): 'Avowedly written for the unlearned, and combining interest of matter and a quaint simplicity of style, the book hit the popular taste. . . . No mediæval work was more widely diffused in the vernacular.' Some three hundred manuscripts are said to be in existence. There are three English versions, of which two, both contained in manuscripts of 1410–1420, are superior to the other. One of these (in Cotton MS. Titus C. 16) is the text generally found in print; the other, in Northern dialect (in Egerton MS. 1982), was published by G. F. Warner in 1889, with an excellent introduction and notes, and is that from which our extracts are taken. For fuller account see *Encyc. Brit.* and *Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.v.; *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 2.90–100.

THE REBIRTH OF THE PHŒNIX

Text, p. 25. In order to show the relation of the English translation to the iginal, a passage of the French text printed by Dr. Warner is here reproced; but it must be understood that this undoubtedly differs from the precis t on which the present English version is based:

En Egipte est la cite de Eliopole, cest a dire la cite de solail. En celle y ad un ple fait reonde, a la guise de temple de Jerusalem. Luy preistres de ceo temple ac

par escript la date del oysel qad a noun Fenix, qi nest qe un soul en monde, et se vient la arder sur laulter de ceo temple au chief de v^c ans, qar tant vit il. Ly preistres apparaille et met sur cel aulter espices, et soufre vif, et autres choses qi legerement enflaument, si qe ly oisel se vient ardoir tot en cendres. Et le primer iour apres lem troeve as cendres un verm; et le secund iour lem trove loisel tot parfait; et le tiercz iour il sen vole. Et ensi ni ad totdys qe un oisel soul de celle nature; et vrayment ceo est grant miracle de Dieu. Et puet homme comparer cel oisel a Dieu, en ceo qe ni ad Dieu forsqe un soul, et en ceo qe nostre Seignur resuscita le tiercz iour. Cest oisel veit homme souent voler en celles parties. Et nest gairs pluis grant dun aigle; et il ad un crest sur la teste pluis grant qe un pauon, et ad col tout iaune de la colour dun oriel bien lusant, et le dos de ynde, et les aeles de purpre colour, et la cowe reget de travers de iaune et de rouge. Et est tres belle a veoir au solail, qar il tresluyt mult noblement.

In Egipte also es a citee þat es called Eliople,[1] þat es als mykill at say[2] as þe citee of þe sonne. In þis citee es a temple, round in þe maner of þe temple of Jerusalem. Þe preste of þe temple has writen in a buke þe date of a fewle[3] þat men calles Fenix; and þer es bot ane in all þe werld. And þis fewle liffes fyve hundreth ȝere; and at þe fyve hundreth ȝere[4] end he commes to þe forsaid temple, and apon þe awter he brynnes himself all to powder. And þe preste of þe temple, þat knawes by his buke þe tyme of his commyng, makes þe awter redy, and lays þerapon diverse spiceries[5] and sulphure vive,[6] and stikkes of þe junipre tree, and oþer thinges þat will sone brynne. And þan the fewle commes, and lightes apon þe awter, and fannez with his wenges ay till þe forsaid thinges be sett on fire; and þare he brynnes himself all till asches. On þe morue[7] þai fynd in þe asches as it ware a worme; on þe secund day þat worme es turned till a fewle perfitely fourmed; and on þe thridd day it flies fra þat place to þe place whare it was wont to dwell. And so þer es nevermare bot ane. Þis ilke fewle betakens oure Lord Jesu Criste, in als mykill as þer es bot a[8] Godd, þat rase on þe thridd day fra deed to lyfe. Þis forsaid fewle es ofttymes sene ayrand[9] aboute, when þe weder es faire and clere; and þai say þare þat when þai see þat fewle sore in þe aer, þai sall afterward hafe gude ȝeres and miry, for þai say it es a fewle of heven. And þis fewle es na mare þan ane egle of body. He has on his heved a creste as a pacok, bot it es mykill mare þan þe creste

1 Heliopolis, a short distance from Cairo
2 as much as to say
3 bird
4 year's
5 spicy substances
6 sulphur vivum, horse brimstone
7 morrow
8 one
9 moving in the air

of a pacok. His nekke es galow, and his back es ynde[1] colour; his wenges er reed, and his taile es barred overthwert[2] with grene and galowe and reed. And in þe sonne he semes wonder faire, for þir[3] er þe colours þat er fairest schewand.[4]

THE PARADISE OF THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

Text, pp. 137–8. Almost any encyclopædia, and the larger dictionaries under the word 'Assassin,' will give some information on the matter of this section. The Assassins were so called because they were intoxicated with hashish (see the 'maner of drinke' below). Mandeville draws from Odoric (Yule, *Cathay* I. 153–5) or Marco Polo (Book I, chap. 22); see Yule's notes to both. The 'old man,' or sheikh, derived his title from the mountainous region south of the Caspian which was under his sway. In particular, he had a mountain castle at Alamūt in the Elburz range, some ninety miles northwest of Teheran, and just south of a line joining Teheran and Rasht. The rise of this power may be assigned to 1090, or thereabouts, and the destruction of the castles where the sheikhs held sway to about 1256.

Besyde þe ile of Pentoxore, þe whilk es Prestre Johnez, es anoþer ile bathe lang and brade, þe whilk es called Mulstorak[5]; and it es under þe lordschepe of Prestre John. In þis ile es grete plentee of all maner of gudes and ricchess. And in þat land was sum tyme a riche man þat was called Catolonabes, and he was a grete man and a wonder wyly. And he had a faire castell and a strang, standand apon a hill, and he gert[6] make aboute it strang wallez and hie. And within þase wallez he gert make a faire gardyn, and plant þerin all maner of treez berand diverse fruytz. He gert plant þerin also all maner of erbez of gude smell, and þat bare faire floures. Þare ware also in þat gardyne many faire welles, and besyde þaim ware many faire halles and chaumbres, paynted with gold and azure wele and curiousely with diverse storys, and with diverse maners of briddes, þe whilk semed as þai sang and turned by engyne,[7] as þai had bene all quikke.[8] He putte also in þat gardyne all maner of fewles þat he myght get, and all maner of bestez þat he myght fynd, to make a man solace and disporte. And he putte also into þat gardyne faire damysellz within þe

1 blue (indigo)
2 crosswise
3 these
4 showing (i.e. to look upon)
5 Melazgerd, in Armenia, north
6 caused to
7 mechanism

assailed þis castell, and slew Catolonabes, and destruyd all his ricchess and faire thinges þat ware in his Paradys, and kest doune his castell; and ȝit er þe welles þare, and sum other thinges, bot na ricchess. It es noȝt lang sen it was destruyd.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Text, p. 84. Mandeville is here indebted to the so-called *Letter of Prester John*, extant before 1177. The Latin runs (Zarncke, *Der Priester Johannes*, in *Abh. Phil.-Hist. Classe der Königl.-Sächs. Ges. der Wiss.*, Vol. 7, Leipzig, 1879, pp. 912–3): 'Quod nemus situm est ad radicem montis Olimpi, unde fons perspicuus oritur, omnium in se specierum saporem retinens. Variatur autem sapor per singulas horas diei et noctis, et progreditur itinere dierum trium non longe a Paradyso, unde Adam fuit expulsus. Si quis de fonte illo ter jejunus gustaverit, nullam ex illa die infirmitatem patietur, semperque erit quasi in ætate XXX duorum annorum, quamdiu vixerit.' The European notions of the Fountain of Youth all go back to this, according to E. W. Hopkins ('The Fountain of Youth,' in *Jour. Am. Or. Soc.* 26 (1905). 32 ff.).

At þe heved of þis ilk forest es þe citee of Polombe; and besyde þat citee es a mountayne wharoff þe citee takez þe name, for men callez þe mountayne Polombe. And at þe fote of þis mountayne es a well, noble and faire; and þe water þeroff has a swete savour and reflaire,[1] as it ware of diverse maner of spicery. And ilke houre of þe day þe water chaungez diversely his savour and his smell. And wha so drinkes fastand thryes of þat well, he sall be hale of what maner of malady þat he hase. And forþi[2] þa[3] þat wonnez[4] nere þat well drynkez þeroff þe ofter, and þerfore þai hafe nevermare sekeness, bot evermare þai seme ȝung. I, John Maundevill, sawe þis well, and drank þeroff thrys and all my felawes, and evermare sen þat tyme I fele me þe better and þe haler, and suppose[5] for to do till þe tyme þat Godd of his grace will make me to passe oute of þis dedly lyf. Sum men callez þat well *Fons Juventutis*, þat es for to say, þe well of ȝowthehede[6]; for þai þat drinkez þeroff semez allway ȝung. And þai say þis

[1] odor
[2] therefore
[3] those
[4] dwell
[5] MS. supposez
[6] youth

5. Polombe: Quilon, or Quillon, not far from Cape Comorin, the southernmost point of India, on the west coast (Yule, *Cathay* 12. 71).

well commez fra Paradys terrestre,[1] for it es so vertuous. Thurghoute all þis cuntree þer growes þe best gynger þat es ower whare[2]; and marchaunds commez þider fra ferre cuntreez for to bye it.

ST. THOMAS AND INDIAN IDOLATRY

Text, pp. 86–7. From Odoric, chaps. 18, 19 (Yule, *Cathay* 1. 80–83).

Fra þis land men gase by many diverse placez to a cuntree þat es called Mabaron[3]; and it es fra þe forsaid land x day-journeez. And it es a grete rewme[4] and a large, and many gude citeez and tounes þerin. In þat land of Mabaron liez Sayne Thomas þe apostle, and his body all hale, in a faire toumbe in þe citee of Calamy[5]; for þare was he martird and graven.[6] Bot afterwardes þe Assirienes tuke his body, and bare it to a citee in Mesopotamy þat es called Edisse.[7] Bot eftsones[8] it was translated agayne to þe foresaid citee, and layd in þe forsaid toumbe; and his arme with his hand þat he putt in oure Lordes syde after his resurreccioun, when he said, *Noli esse incredulus, sed fidelis*,[9] lyez withouten in a vessell. And by that hand men of þat cuntree giffez þaire jugementz, to wit wha has riȝt. For if any stryf be betwene twa parties, and ayther party affermez þat he has riȝt in his cause, þan þai ger write in a scrowe[10] þe riȝt of ayther party, and puttez þase billes in þe hand of Sayne[11] Thomas; and als fast[12] þe hand castez oute þe bille þat contenez þe fals cause, and þe toþer it haldez still. And þerfore men commez ofttymes oute of ferre cuntreez þider, for to declare a riȝtwys cause betwene party and party, þe whilk es in doute. Þe kirke whare Sayne Thomas lyes es mykill and faire, and full of ymagery of þaire mawmets[13]; and þase ymagez er ilk ane of þe stature of twa men at þe leste.

Bot þare es ane þat passez all oþer of stature; and þat es richely and really[14] enourned[15] with gold and precious stanes all aboute, and sittez

1 earthly
2 anywhere where (redundant phrase)
3 the Coromandel coast of southern India (Yule, *Cathay* 1. 80)
4 realm
5 St. Thomas, a few miles south of Madras
6 buried
7 Edessa, or Urfa, in Syria
8 afterwards
9 John 20. 27
10 scroll
11 saint
12 as fast as might be, very fast
13 false gods, idols (*lit.* Mahomets)
14 royally
15 adorned

in a chaier nobelly arraied. And he has aboute his nekk as it ware brade gyrdils[1] of silke, wele hernayst[2] with gold and preciouse stanes. To þat ymage men commez fra ferre in pilgrimage with grete devocioun, als comounly als Cristen men commez to Sayne James.[3] And sum of þam, for þe grete devocioun þai hafe to þat mawmet, ay as þai ga, er lukand douneward to þe erthe, and will nogt luke aboute þam, for þai schuld see nathing þat schuld lette þaire devocioun. Þare commez sum also þider in pilgrimage þat beres scharpe knyfes in þaire handes, with whilk, ay as þai ga by þe way, þai wound þamself in þe legges and þe armes, and in oþer placez of þaire body, þat þe blude rynnez doune fra þer woundes in grete fuysoun.[4] And þis þai do for lufe of þat ydole, and saise þat he es full blissed þat will dye for þe lufe of his mawmet. And sum of þam bringez with þam þaire childer, and slaez þaim and makes sacrifice of þam to þaire mawmet; and þai take þe blude of þaire childer, and sprenklez it apon þe ymage. Sum, also, fra[5] þai passe oute of þer housez til þai comme before þaire mawmet, at ilke a thridd passe knelis doune apon þe erthe with grete devocioun. And þai bring with þam incense and oþer thinges swete smelland, for to turify[6] þat ymage, as we do here to Goddes body. And þare es before þat ymage, as it ware, a poonde[7] or a vyver,[8] full of water; and into þat pilgrimes castez gold and silver and precious stanes withouten noumer, insteed of offerand. And forþi þe mynisters þat kepez þat ilk mawmet, when þai hafe mister[9] of any monee for reparailyng of þaire kirk, or for any oþer thing þat fallez to þat ilke mawmet, þai ga to þat ilke poonde, and takez oute þeroff als mykill as þam nedez. And ȝe schall understand þat, when grete festez commez of þat mawmet, as þe dedicacioun of þe kirk or þe tronyng[10] of þat mawmet, all þe cuntree assemblez þider; and þai sett þis mawmet with grete wirschepe in a chariot, wele arraid with clathez of gold and of silke, and ledez him with grete sollempnitee aboute þe citee. And before þe chariot gase first in processioun all þe maydens of þe cuntree, twa and twa togyder; and þan all þe pilgrymmes þat commez þider fra ferre cuntreez, of whilke sum for þe grete devocioun þai

[1] a broad girdle
[2] ornamented
[3] Saint James of Compostella
[4] abundance, profusion
[5] from the time when
[6] incense
[7] pond
[8] aquarium (*vivarium*)
[9] need
[10] throning

hafe to þat mawmet fallez doune before þe chariot, and latez it gang over þam. And so er sum of þam slayne, sum þaire armes and sum þaire schankes broken; and þai trowe þat, þe mare payne þai suffer here for lufe of þaire mawmet, þe mare joy in þe toþer werld sall þai hafe, and þe nerre þaire godd sall þai be. And sikerly þai suffer so mykill payne and martirdom apon þaire bodys for þe lufe of þat ilke mawmet, þat unnethes[1] will any Cristen man suffer half so mykill, ne þe tende[2] parte, for þe lufe of oure Lorde Jesu Criste.

THE SULTAN OF EGYPT

Text, pp. 20–1

Þe sowdan[3] has three wyfes, of þe whilke ane sall be a Cristen womman, and þe oþer twa Sarezenes. And ane of þir wyfes sall dwell in Jerusalem, anoþer at Damasc, and þe thridd at Ascalon.[4] And, ay when him list, he gase to visit þam, and umqwhyle[5] ledes þam aboute with him. Noght forþi[6] he has lemmanes, als many as him list have; for, when he comes till any citee or toune, he gers bring before him all þe nobilest and þe fairest maydens of þe cuntree nere aboute, and he gers þam be keped honestly and wirschipfully. And, when he will hafe any of þam, he gers þaim all be broght before him, and wha so es maste lykand till him, he sendes till hir or takes þe ryng off his fynger, and castez till hir. And þan sall scho be tane,[7] and waschen and bawmed[8] and wirschipfully cledd, and after souper be broght till his chaumbre. And þus he duse ay when he will. Before þe sowdan sall na straunger com þat he ne sall be cledd in clathe of gold or tars[9] or in chamelet,[10] a maner of clething whilk þe Sarzenes usez. And als sone as he has sight of þe sowdan, be it at wyndow or elleswhare, him behoves knele doune and kisse þe erthe; for swilk es þe maner þare to do reverence to þe sowdan, when any man will speke with him. And when any straungers commes till him in message[11] oute of ferre landes, his men sall stand aboute him with drawen swerdes in handes, and þer handes up on loft,[12] to stryke þam doune, if þai speke

1 scarcely, with difficulty
2 tenth
3 sultan
4 West of Jerusalem, on the coast
5 from time to time
6 none the less
7 taken
8 anointed
9 a rich Oriental stuff
10 damasked silk
11 on an embassy
12 aloft

any thing þat displesez þe sowdan. Þare sall na straunger com before him for to ask him any thing þat ne his asked sall be graunted him, if it be resounable and noȝt agayne þaire lawe. And riȝt so duse all oþer princez and lordes in þat cuntree; for þai say þat na man suld com before a prince þat he ne schuld passe gladder away þan he come þiderward.

THE EARTH IS ROUND

Text, pp. 90–2

And ȝe schall understand þat in þis land, and in many oþer þare aboute, men may noȝt see þe sterne[1] þat es called *Polus Articus*, whilk standes even north and stirrez never, by whilk schippemen er ledd, for it es noȝt sene in þe south. Bot þer es anoþer sterne, whilke es called antartic, and þat es even agayne[2] þe toþer sterne; and by þat sterne er schippemen ledd þare, as schippemen er ledd here by *Polus Articus*. And, riȝt as þat sterne may noȝt be sene here, on þe same wyse þis sterne may noȝt be sene þare. And þareby may men see wele þat þe werld es all rounde; for parties[3] of þe firmament whilk may be sene in sum cuntree may noȝt be sene in anoþer. And þat may men prove þus. For, if a man myght fynd redy schipping and gude company, and þerto had his hele,[4] and wald ga to see þe werld, he myght ga all aboute þe werld, bathe aboven and benethe. And þat prufe I þus, after[5] þat I hafe sene. For I hafe bene in Braban,[6] and sene by þe astrolaby[7] þat þe pole artyc es þare liii degreez hegh, and in Almayne[8] towardes Boem[9] it has lviii degrez, and forþermare[10] toward þe north it has lxii degrez of height and sum mynutes. All þis I persayved by þe astrolaby. And ȝe schall understand þat in þe south, even ynentes[11] þis sterne, es þe sterne þat es called pole antartic. Þise twa sternes stirrez never mare; and aboute þaim movez þe firmament, as a qwhele[12] duse aboute ane axeltree. And so þe lyne þat es betwene þise twa sternez departez[13] all þe firmament in twa partes, ayther ylike mykill.[14] Afterwardes I went toward

[1] star
[2] exactly opposite to
[3] parts
[4] health
[5] according to
[6] Brabant
[7] astrolabe
[8] Germany
[9] Bohemia
[10] further
[11] exactly opposite
[12] wheel
[13] separates
[14] much alike

þe south, and I fand þat in Liby[1] seez men first þe sterne antartyke; and, as I went ferrer, I fand þat in hie Liby it hase in height xviii degreez and sum mynutes, of whilke mynutes lx makez a degre. And so, passand by land and by see toward þe cuntree þat I spakk off are,[2] and oþer landes and iles þat er beȝond, I fand þat þis sterne antartik had in height xxxiii degreez. And, if I had had cumpany and schipping þat wald hafe gane ferrer, I trow forsothe þat we schuld hafe sene all þe roundeness of þe firmament, þat es to say bathe þe emisperies,[3] þe uppermare and þe nedermare.[4] For, as I sayd ȝow before, halfe þe firmament es betwene þise twa sternes; þe whilk I hafe sene. . . . And þerfore I say sikerly þat a man myght go all þe werld aboute, bathe aboven and bynethe, and comme agayne to his awen cuntree, so þat he had his hele, gude schipping, and gude company, as I said before. And all way he schuld fynd men, landes, and iles and citeez and townes, as er in þir cuntrees. For ȝe wate wele þat þase men þat dwellez even under þe pole antartyk er fote agayne fote to þase þat dwellez even under þe pole artyke, als wele as we and þase men þat dwellez agaynes us er fote agayne fote; and riȝt so it es of oþer parties of þe werld. For ilke a party of þe erthe and of þe see hase his contrary of thinges, whilk er even[5] agaynes him. And ȝe schall understand þat, as I conjecture, þe land of Prestre John, Emperour of Inde, es even under us. For, if a man schall ga fra Scotland or Ingland unto Jerusalem, he sall ga all way upward. For oure land es þe lawest[6] party of þe west, and þe land of Prestre John es in þe lawest party of þe este. And þai hafe day when we hafe nyght, and nyght when we hafe day. And, als mykill as a man ascendes upward oute of oure cuntreez to Jerusalem, als mykill schall he go dounward to þe land of Prestre John; and þe cause es for þe erthe and þe see er rounde. For it es þe comoun worde þat Jerusalem es in myddes of þe erthe; and þat may wele be proved þus. For, and a man þare take a spere and sett it even in þe erthe at midday, when þe day and þe nyght er bathe ylyke lang, it makez na schadowe till na party.[7] And David also beres witnes þeroff, þare he saise: *Deus autem*

[1] Libya
[2] before
[3] hemispheres
[4] nether
[5] just, exactly
[6] lowest
[7] direction

[illegible] ratus est salutem in medio terre,[1] þat es to say [illegible] e þe begynnyng of þe werld wroght hele i [illegible] And þerfore þai þat gase oute of oure cuntree [illegible] [illegible]salem, als many journez[2] as þai make to g [illegible] journez sall þai make to ga in to þe land c Prestre John dounward fra Jerusalem. And so he may ga into þas iles environand all þe roundness of þe erthe and of þe see, till h com even under us. And þerfore I hafe ofttymes thoght on a tale þa I herd, when I was ȝung, how a worthy man of oure cuntree wer on a tyme for to see þe werld; and he passed Inde[3] and many ile byȝonde Inde, whare er ma þan v[m][4] iles, and he went so lang by lan and by see, envirounand þe werld, þat he fand ane ile whare he her men speke his awen langage. For he herd ane[5] dryfe bestez, sayan to þam swilke wordes as he herd men say til oxen in his awen cun tree gangand at þe plugh; of whilk he had grete mervaile, for he wi noȝt how it myght be. Bot I suppose he had so lang went[6] on lan and on see, envirounand þe werld, þat he was commen in to his awe marchez[7]; and, if he had passed forþermare, he schuld hafe comme even to his awen cuntree. Bot for he herd þat mervaile, and mygl get schipping na ferrere, he turned agayne as he come; and so h had a grete travaile. And it befell efterward þat he went into No way; and a tempest of wynd in þe see drafe him, so þat he arryve in ane ile. And, when he was þare, he wist wele it was þe ile in whil he had bene before and herd his awen speche, as men drafe beste And þat myght wele be; þof all[8] it be þat symple men of cunnyn trowe noȝt þat men may ga under þe erthe bot-if[9] þai fall unto J firmament. For as us think[10] þat þase men er under us, so think þai þat we er under þaim.

1 Ps. 74. 12
2 day's journeys
3 India
4 five thousand
5 one, a man
6 traveled
7 borders
8 even though
9 unless
10 it seems to u

THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE

Text, pp. 149–50. To afford an opportunity of comparison with the current Southern text, the beginning of this section is here transcribed from Halliwell's reprint (London, 1839, p. 303), with changes in capitalization: 'And beȝonde the lond and the yles and the desertes of Prestre Johnes lordschipe, in goynge streyght toward the est, men fynde nothing but mountaynes and roches fulle grete: and there is the derke regyoun, where no man may see, nouther be day ne be nyght, as thei of the contree seyn. And that desert and that place of derknesse duren fro this cost unto Paradys Terrestre, where that Adam, oure foremest fader, and Eve weren putt, that dwelleden there but lytylle while; and that is towards the est, at the begynnynge of the erthe.'

For the subject in general, see Coli, *Il Paradiso Terrestre Dantesco*, Florénce, 1897.

Beȝond þir ilez þat I hafe talde ȝow off, and þe desertez of þe lordschepe of Prestre John, to ga even[1] est, es na land inhabited, as I said before, bot wastez and wildernessez, and grete rochez and mountaynes, and a myrk[2] land, whare na man may see, nyght ne day, as men of þas cuntreez talde us. And þat mirk land and þase desertez laste riȝt to Paradyse terrestre, wharein Adam and Eve ware putte; bot þai ware þare bot a lytill while. And þat place es toward þe este, at þe begynnyng of þe erthe. Bot þat es noȝt oure este, whare þe sonne risez till us; for when þe sonne risez in þase cuntreez, þan es it midnyght in our cuntree, because of þe roundness of þe erthe. For, as I said before, Godd made þe erthe all rounde, in myddez of þe firmament. Bot þe hillez and þe valays þat er now on þe erthe er noȝt bot of Noe flude, thurgh þe whilk þe tendre erthe was removed fra his place, and þare become a valay, and þe hard erthe habade[3] still, and þare er now hilles.

Off Paradys can I noȝt speke properly, for I hafe noȝt bene þare; and þat forthinkez[4] me. Bot als mykill as I hafe herd of wyse men, and men of credence, of þase cuntreez, I will tell ȝow. Paradys terrestre, as men saise, es þe hiest land of þe werld; and it es so hye þat it touchez nere to þe cercle of þe moone. For it es so hye þat Noe[5] flode myght noȝt com þerto, whilk flude coverd all þe erthe bot it. Paradys es closed all aboute with a wall; bot whareoff þe wall es

[1] directly
[2] dark, gloomy
[3] abode
[4] that I regret
[5] Noah's

made, can na man tell. It es all mosse-begrowen, and coverd so with mosse and with bruschez þat men may see na stane, ne noȝt elles wharoff a wall schuld be made. Þe walle of Paradys strechez fra þe south toward þe north; and þer es nane entree open into it, because of fire evermare brynnand, þe whilk es called þe flawmand swerde[1] þat Godd ordaynd þare before þe entree, for na man schuld entre.

In þe middes of Paradys es a well, out of þe whilke þer commez foure flodez,[2] þat rynnez thurgh diverse landez. Þir[3] flodez sinkez doune into þe erthe within Paradyse, and rynnez so under þe erthe many a myle, and afterwardes comme þai up agayne oute of þe erthe in ferre cuntreez.

SIR JOHN'S MODESTY

Text, pp. 155-6

Þare er many oþer cuntreez and oþer mervailes whilk I hafe noȝt sene, and þerfore I can noȝt speke properly of þam; and also in cuntreez whare I hafe bene er many mervailes of whilk I speke noȝt, for it ware owere[4] lang to tell. And also I will tell na mare of mervailes þat er þare, so þat oþer men þat wendez þider may fynd many new thingez to speke off, whilk I hafe noȝt spoken off. For many men hase grete lykyng and desyre for to here new thinges; and þerfore will I now ceesse of tellyng of diverse thingez þat I sawe in þase cuntreez, so þat þase þat covetez to visit þase cuntrez may fynd new thinges ynewe to tell off, for solace and recreacioun of þaim þat lykez to here þam.

And I, JOHN MAWNDEVILL, knyght, þat went oute of my cuntree and passed þe see, þe ȝere of oure Lord Jesu Criste MCCCXXXII and hase passed thurgh many landes, cuntreez, and iles, and hase bene at many wirschipfull journeez[5] and dedez of armez with worthy men — if all[6] I be unworþi — and now am commen to rest, as man discomfitt for age and travaile and febilness of body, þat constraynez me þarto, and for oþer certayne causez, I hafe compiled þis buke and writen it, as it coome to my mynde, in þe ȝere of oure Lord Jesu Criste MCCCLXVI, þat es for to say, in þe foure and thrittyde ȝere efter þat I departed oute of þis land, and tuke my way þiderward.

[1] Gen. 3. 24
[2] Gen. 2. 10 ff.
[3] these
[4] too
[5] days of battle
[6] even if

And for als mykill as many men trowez noȝt bot þat at[1] þai see with þaire eghen, or þat þai may consayve with þaire awen kyndely[2] wittes, þerfore I made my way in my commyng hamward unto Rome, to schew my buke till oure Haly Fader þe Pape. And I tald him þe mervailes whilk I had sene in diverse cuntreez, so þat he, with his wyse counsaile, wald examyne it with diverse folke þat er in Rome—for þare er evermare dwelland men of all naciouns of þe werld. And a lytill after, when he and his wyse counsaile had examynde it all thurgh, he said to me for certayne þat all was soth þat was þerin. For he said þat he had a buke of Latyn þat conteyned all þat and mykill mare, after whilk buke the *Mappa Mundi* es made; and þat buke he schewed me. And þerfore oure Haly Fader þe Pape hase ratified and confermed my buke in all poyntes.

Qwherfore I pray til all þase þat redez þis buke, or heres it redd, þat þai will pray for me, and I schall pray for þaim. And all þase þat saise for me devotely a Pater Noster and ane Ave, þat Godd forgife me my synnez, he graunt þam parte of all my pilgrimage, and all oþer gude dedis þat I hafe done, or may do in tyme commyng unto my lyfez end. And I, in þat in me es, makez þam parceneres[3] of me,[4] prayand to Godd, of wham all grace commez, þat he fulfill with his grace all þase þat þis buke redez or heres, and save þam and kepe þam in body and saule, and after þis lyf bring þam to þe cuntree whare joy es, and endles rest, and peesse withouten end. Amen.

A PILGRIMAGE BY SEA TO COMPOSTELLA

The manuscript containing this poem has been ascribed to the time of Henry VI (1422–1471). It is here printed from Furnivall's edition of *The Stacions of Rome* (E.E.T.S. No. 25).

Men may leve alle gamys[5]
That saylen to Seynt Jamys,[6]
Ffor many a man hit gramys,[7]
    When they begyn to sayle;

[1] that
[2] natural, native
[3] sharers, partners
[4] MS. þam
[5] put aside all mirth
[6] Santiago de Compostella, in the province of Galicia, in northwestern Spain
[7] distresses

Ffor when they have take the see
At Sandwyche[1] or at Wynchylsee,[2]
At Brystow,[3] or where that hit bee,
Theyr hertes begyn to fayle.

Anone the mastyr commaundeth fast
To hys shypmen, in alle the hast,[4]
To dresse[5] hem sone about the mast,
Theyr takelyng to make;
With 'Howe! hissa!' then they cry;
'What, howe! mate, thow stondyst to[6] ny,
Thy felow may nat hale[7] the[8] by';
Thus they begyn to crake.[9]

A boy or tweyn anone upstyen,[10]
And overthwart the sayle-yerde lyen.
'Y how! taylia!' the remenaunt cryen,
And pulle with alle theyr myght.
'Bestowe[11] the boote,[12] boteswayne, anon,
That our pylgryms may pley theron;
For som ar lyke to cowgh and grone
Or[13] hit be full mydnyght.'

'Hale the bowelyne[14]! now, vere the shete!—
Cooke, make redy anoon our mete!'
'Our pylgryms have no lust to ete,
I pray God yeve hem rest.'
'Go to the helm! what, howe! no nere[15]!'—
'Steward, felow, a pot of bere!'
'Ye shalle have, sir, with good chere,
Anon alle of the best.'

[1] north of Dover
[2] southwest of Dover, in Sussex
[3] Bristol
[4] all haste
[5] make ready
[6] too
[7] haul
[8] thee
[9] call aloud
[10] climb
[11] stow
[12] boat
[13] ere
[14] a rope made fast to the middle part of the outside of a sail
[15] nearer (no closer to the wind?)

'Y howe! trussa! hale in the brayles[1]!
Thow halyst nat, be God, thow fayles!'—
'O se howe welle owre good shyp sayles!'
And thus they say among.
'Hale in the wartake[2]!' 'Hit shal be done.'—
'Steward, cover the boorde anone,
And set bred and salt therone,
And tary nat to long!'

Then cometh oone and seyth: 'Be mery,
Ye shall have a storme or a pery.[3]'
'Holde thow thy pese! thow canst no whery,[4]
Thow medlyst wondyr sore.'
Thys menewhyle[5] the pylgryms ly,
And have theyr bowlys fast theym by,
And cry aftyr hote malvesy[6]:
'Thow helpe for to restore.'

And som wold have a saltyd tost,[7]
Ffor they myght ete neyther sode[8] ne rost;
A man myght sone pay for theyr cost,
As for oo day or twayne.
Som layde theyr bookys on theyr kne,
And rad[9] so long they myght nat se.
'Allas, myne hede wolle cleve on thre!'
Thus seyth another certayne.

Then commeth owre owner, lyke a lorde,
And speketh many a royall worde,
And dresseth hym to the hygh borde,
To see alle thyng be welle.
Anone he calleth a carpentere,
And byddyth hym bryng with hym hys gere,[10]

1 small ropes fastened to the edges of sails
2 (?)
3 squall
4 (?)
5 in the meantime
6 malmsey
7 toast
8 anything boiled
9 read
10 tools

To make the cabans here and there,
With many a febylle[1] celle.

A sak of strawe were there ryght good,
Ffor som must lyg[2] theym in theyr hood;
I had as lefe be in the wood,
Without[e] mete or drynk.
For when that we shall go to bedde,
The pumpe is[3] nygh oure beddes hede;
A man were as good be[4] dede
As smell therof the stynk.

[1] slightly built [2] lie [3] MS. was [4] MS. to

RELIGIOUS AND DIDACTIC PIECES

ROLLE, THE FORM OF PERFECT LIVING

Richard Rolle, who was born near the end of the thirteenth century (the 'ear is not known) at Thornton Dale, near Pickering in northern Yorkshire, 'as a hermit and mystic who wrote the first *original* [since the *Ancren Riwle* s translated] English prose after the Conquest (Jusserand, *Lit. Hist. Eng. People* . 218). In his early youth he was sent as a student to Oxford, but was repelled y the scholastic philosophy there dominant, and made up his mind to turn to life of contemplation. For the next four years he lived in a solitary cell on he estate of friends who provided him with the necessaries of life, and there e passed through three stages of the contemplative life — *purificatio*, *illumi-atio*, and *contemplatio* proper (cf. H. O. Taylor, *The Mediæval Mind* 2. 362 ff.), n the last of which he had the mystic sense of the direct vision of God. After raveling about for some time, in the hope of teaching his faith, as to which e met with little encouragement and considerable opposition, he settled near he recluse Margaret Kirkby at Ainderby, near Northallerton (famous for the Battle of the Standard), also in the North Riding, where he gave assistance nd instruction to her and other recluses. Later he lived and wrote at Hampole, ve miles northwest of Doncaster, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where e died in 1349, and whence he has come to be known as Richard Rolle of Iampole.

Rolle was a figure apparently but little heeded by the authorities of his own ime, yet one of real significance. In his emphasis on the direct relation be-ween the individual soul and God, rather than on mere obedience to the Church, he was a forerunner of Wycliffe and Luther; and through the fervor f his mystical outpourings, he still makes a strong emotional appeal.

His works, which it is hard in some cases to distinguish from those of his nitators and translators, were sometimes written in Latin and sometimes in English, one of the best known of those in English being a long poem, *The Prick of Conscience*. His editor Horstman says of him: 'His chief character-stic as a writer is originality — he is essentially a genius; everywhere he cuts ut new ways, lays new foundations. Next, he is preëminently a lyric; whether e writes in prose or verse, he writes from feeling, from momentary inspiration. Besides, he is of a remarkable versatility and facility; he writes with equal ase in Latin and English, in verse and prose, and in all kinds of verse, fre-uently mixing prose and verse in the same work; he writes postils, commen-aries, epistles, satires, polemic treatises, prayers and devotions, lyric and lidactic poetry, epigrams' (2. xxxv). Our selections are from his epistle known

as *The Form of Perfect Living*, as it appears in MS. Cambr. Dd. V. 64, where it is dedicated to the recluse Margaret. For this text, and for an extended account of Richard Rolle and his place in the history of mysticism, see *Richard Rolle of Hampole*, ed. C. Horstman, London, 1895, in *Yorkshire Writers* (*Library of Early English Writers*). Our selections are from Vol. 1, pp. 29-30, 46-9.

THE LOVE OF GOD

Amore langueo. Þir[1] twa wordes er[2] wryten in þe boke of lufe, þat es kalled þe Sang of Lufe, or þe Sang of Sanges. For he þat mykel[3] lufes, hym lyst[4] oft syng of his luf, for joy þat he or scho hase when þai thynk on þat þat þai lufe, namely[5] if þair lover be trew and lufand. And þis es þe Inglisch of thies twa wordes: 'I languysch for lufe.' Sere[6] men in erth has sere gyftes and graces of God, bot þe special gift of þas þat ledes solitary lyf es for to lufe Jesu Criste. Þow says me: 'All men lufes hym þat haldes[7] his comawndementes.' Soth it es. Bot all men þat kepes hys byddyngs kepes noght also hys cownsayle. And all þat dos his cownsell er noght also fulfyld of[8] þe swetnes of his lufe, ne feles noght þe fyre of byrnand luf of hert. Forþi þe diversite of lufe makes þe diversite of halynes and of mede.[9] In heven, þe awngels þat er byrnandest in lufe er nerrest God. Also men and women þat maste[10] has of Goddes lufe, whether þai do penance or nane, þai sall be in þe heghest degre in heven; þai þat lufes hym lesse, in þe lawer order. If þou lufe hym mykel, mykel joy and swetnes and byrnyng þou feles in his lufe, þat es þi comforth and streng[t]h nyght and day. If þi lufe be not byrnand in hym, litel es þi delyte. For hym may na man fele in joy and swetnes, bot-if[11] þai be clene, and fylled with his lufe; and þartill[12] sal þou com with grete travayle in praier and thynkyng, havand swilk meditacions þat er al in þe lufe and in þe lovyng of God. And when þou ert at þi mete, love ay God in þi thoght at ilk a[13] morsel, and say þus in þi hert: 'Loved be þou, Keyng, and thanked be þou, Keyng, and blyssed be þou, Keyng, Jesu all my joyng, of all þi giftes gude; þat for me spylt þi blude, and died on þe

[1] these; cf. Cant. 2. 5
[2] are
[3] much, greatly
[4] he desires
[5] especially
[6] diverse
[7] keeps
[8] filled with
[9] reward
[10] most
[11] unless
[12] to this condition, thereto
[13] every

rude; þou gyf me grace to syng þe sang of þi lovyng.' And thynk it noght anely[1] whils þou etes, bot bath before and after, ay bot when[2] þou prayes or spekes. Or if þou have other thoghtes þat þou has[3] mare swetnes in and devocion þan in þase þat I lere[4] þe, þou may thynk [þam]. For I hope þat God will do swilk[5] thoghtes in þi hert als he es payde of,[6] and als þou ert ordaynde for. When þou prayes, loke noght how mykel þou says, bot how wele, þat þe lofe of þi hert be ay upwarde, and thy thoght on þat þou sayes, als mykel als þow may. If þou be in prayers and meditacions al þe day, I wate[7] wele þat þou mon wax[8] gretely in þe lufe of Jesu Cryste, and mikel fele of delyte, and within schort tyme.

THE ACTIVE AND THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Twa lyves þar er þat Cristen men lyfes. Ane es called actyve lyfe, for it es in mare[9] bodili warke. Another, contemplatyve lyfe, for it es in mare swetnes gastely.[10] Actife lyfe es mykel owteward, and in mare travel[11] and in mare peryle, for þe temptacions þat er in þe worlde. Contemplatyfe lyfe es mykel inwarde, and forþi[12] it es lastandar,[13] and sykerar,[14] restfuller, delitabiler,[15] luflyer, and mare medeful.[16] For it hase joy in Goddes lufe, and savowre in þe lyf þat lastes ay, in þis present tyme, if it be right ledde. And þat felyng of joy in þe lufe of Jesu passes al other merites in erth. For it es swa harde to com to for þe freelte of oure flesch, and þe many temptacions þat we er umsett[17] with, þat lettes[18] us nyght and day. Al other thynges er lyght at[19] com to, in regarde þarof, for þat may na man deserve, bot anely it es gifen of Goddes godenes, til þam þat verrayli gifes þam to contemplacion and til quiete for Cristes luf.

Til men or wymen þat takes[20] þam til actife lyfe, twa thynges falles.[21] Ane, for to ordayne þair meyne[22] in drede and in þe lufe of

1 only
2 always except when
3 findest
4 teach
5 put such
6 satisfied with
7 know
8 must increase
9 more
10 spiritually
11 labor, toil
12 therefore
13 more lasting
14 more full of security
15 more delightful
16 full of reward
17 set about, surrounded
18 hinder
19 easy to
20 betake
21 are appointed
22 household

God, and fynd þam þaire necessaries, and þamself kepe enterely þe comandementes of God, doand[1] til þar neghbur als þai wil þat þai do til þam. Another es: þat þai do at þar power þe seven werkes of mercy, þe whilk es: to fede þe hungry; to gyf þe thristi a drynk; to cleth þe naked; to herbar hym þat hase na howsyng; to viset þe seke; to comforth þam þat er in prysoun; and to grave[2] dede men. Al þat mai, and hase[3] cost,[4] þai may noght be qwyt[5] with ane or twa of þir, bot þam behoves do þam al, if þai wil have þe benyson[6] on Domesday[7] þat Jesu sal til[8] al gyf þat dose þam. Or els may þai drede þe malysoun[9] þat al mon[10] have þat will noght do þam, when þai had godes[11] to do þam wyth.

Contemplatife lyf hase twa partyes,[12] a lower and a heer. Þe lower party es meditacion of haly wrytyng, þat es Goddes wordes, and in other gude thoghtes and swete þat men hase, of þe grace of God, abowt þe lufe of Jesu Criste, and also in lovyng of God in psalmes and ympnes,[13] or in prayers. Þe hegher party of contemplacion es behaldyng and ȝernyng of[14] þe thynges of heven, and joy in þe Haly Gaste. Þat men hase oft, and[15] if it be swa þat þai be noght prayand with þe mowth, bot anely thynkand of God, and of þe fairehede[16] of aungels and haly sawles.[17] Þan may I say þat contemplacion es a wonderful joy of Goddes luf, þe whilk[18] joy es lovyng of God, þat may noght be talde; and þat wonderful lovyng es in þe saule, and for abundance of joy and swettenes it ascendes in til þe mouth, swa þat þe hert and þe tonge acordes in ane,[19] and body and sawle joyes in God lyvand.[20]

A man or woman þat es ordaynd til contemplatife lyfe, first God enspires þam to forsake þis worlde, and al þe vanite and þe covayties and þe vile luste þarof. Sythen[21] he ledes þam by þar ane,[22] and spekes til þair[23] hert, and, als þe prophete says, he gifes þam at sowke[24] þe swetnes of þe begynnyng of lufe, and þan he settes þam in will[25]

[1] doing
[2] bury
[3] MS. hase and mai (em. H.)
[4] money sufficient
[5] quit, released
[6] blessing
[7] Day of Judgment
[8] to
[9] malediction
[10] must
[11] goods
[12] parts, phases
[13] hymns
[14] for
[15] even
[16] fairness, beauty
[17] souls
[18] which
[19] agree
[20] living
[21] afterwards
[22] by themselves, alone
[23] MS. ȝar
[24] to suck
[25] makes them desire

to gyf þam haly[1] to prayers and meditacions and teres. Sithen, when þai have sufferd many temptacions, and [þe][2] foule noyes[3] of hoghtes þat er ydel, and of vanitees þe whilk wil comber þam þat can oght destroy þam, er passand away, he gars þam[4] geder[5] til þam air hert, and fest[6] anely in hym, and opens til þe egh[7] of þair sawls e gates of heven, swa þat þe ilk[8] egh lokes in til heven; and þan þe ire of lufe verrali ligges[9] in þair hert, and byrnes þarin, and makes it] clene of al erthly filth; and sithen forward[10] þai er contemplatife nen, and ravyst[11] in lufe. For contemplacion es a syght, and þai se n til heven with þar gastly egh. Bot þou sal witt[12] þat na man hase erfite syght of heven whils þai er lifand bodili here; bot als sone als ai dye þai er broght before God, and sese hym face til face, and egh il egh, and wones[13] with hym withouten ende. For hym þai soght, nd hym þai covayted, and hym þai lufed, in al þar myght.

Loo, Margarete, I have schortly sayde þe[14] þe forme of lyvyng, and ow þou may com til perfection, and to lufe hym þat þou hase taken e til. If it do þe gude, and profit til þe, thank God, and pray for me. Þe grace of Jesu Criste be with þe, and kepe þe. Amen.

THE ANCREN RIWLE

The *Ancren Riwle* (*Regulæ Inclusarum*) was written for the guidance of hree sisters of gentle blood who had given themselves up to a religious life, vithout having at that time become nuns. It exists in three languages — French, English, and Latin — the English having been translated from French, nd the Latin from English (G. C. Macaulay, in *Mod. Lang. Rev.* 9. 63 ff.).

The author has been thus characterized: 'His doctrine may be summed ıp in a word: he teaches self-renunciation. But he does it in so kindly and ffectionate a tone that the life he wishes his penitents to submit to does not eem too bitter; his voice is so sweet that the existence he describes seems lmost sweet' (Jusserand, *Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1. 212). His 'work betokens nuch learning, great knowledge of the human heart, as well as deep piety,

1 wholly
2 em. H.
3 annoyances, troubles
4 causes them
5 gather, collect
6 fix
7 eyes
8 same
9 lies
10 from that time on
11 ravished, rapt
12 know
13 dwell
14 to thee

15. Margarete: probably Dame Margaret Kyrkby, an anchoress for whom he felt a holy affection.

and a refined and gentle spirit' (Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.* 1. 200). Ten Brink also refers (*ibid.* 2¹. 16) to 'that aroma, that tinge of poetry, which breathes throughout the language of the *Ancren Riwle*,' to which, as well as to the author's deep spirituality, the work owes its unusual appeal.

Judging from its language, the *Ancren Riwle* was written in the early thirteenth century. The best text is contained in a Cambridge manuscript designated by Macaulay as B (*Mod. Lang. Rev.* 9. 145). Our selections are taken from Morton's text (*The Ancren Riwle*, London, 1853), in which MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Nero A. XIV is reproduced; the pages are 50–2, 72, 132–4, 388–90, 416–22, 422–4. The dialect is southwestern. Morton's translation is published in *The King's Classics* as *The Nun's Rule*.

ANCHORESSES NOT TO LOOK OUT UPON THE WORLD

Vorþui,[1] mine leove[2] sustren,[3] þe leste þæt ȝe ever muwen luvieð our þurles[4]; al beon heo lutle,[5] þe parluris[6] lest[7] and nerewest. Þe cloð in ham beo[8] twovold: blac cloð; þe creoiz[9] hwit, wiðinnen and wiðuten. Þe blake cloð bitockneð þæt ȝe beoð blake and unwurðe[10] toward[11] þe worlde wiðuten; þæt te soðe sunne, þæt is Jesu Crist, haveð[12] wiðuten vorkuled[13] ou; and so wiðuten, ase ȝe beoð, unseauliche imaked ou[14] þurh gleames[15] of his grace. Þet hwite creoiz limpeð[16] to ou; vor þreo manere[17] creoices beoð — reade and blake and hwite. Þe reade limpeð to þeo þæt beoð, vor Godes luve, mid hore[18] blodshedunge irudded[19] and ireaded,[19] ase þe martirs weren. Þe blake creoiz limpeð to þeo[20] þæt makieð i ðe[21] worlde hore penitence vor lodliche[22] sunnen.[23] Þe hwite creoiz limpeð to hwit meidenhod and to clennesse,[24] þæt is muchel pine[25] wel vor to holden.[26] Pine is overal[27] þurh creoiz idon to understonden.[28] Þus bitockneð hwit croiz þe ward[29]

1 wherefore
2 dear
3 sisters
4 love your windows the least that ye ever may
5 and let them all be small
6 those of the parlor
7 smallest
8 let it be
9 cross
10 of no value
11 in the sight of
12 has
13 discolored
14 and so has made you externally as you are, uncomely
15 rays
16 belongs, appertains
17 three kinds
18 their
19 reddened
20 those
21 in the
22 foul, loathsome
23 sins
24 purity
25 difficulty, pains
26 preserve
27 everywhere
28 given to understand = to be understood
29 keeping

1. leste . . . luvieð: properly, according to the French (*Mod. Lang. Rev.* 9. 65), 'the best that you ever can guard,' etc.

of hwit chastite, þæt is muchel pine wel vor to witene.[1] Þe blake cloð also tekeðe[2] bitocnunge,[3] deð[4] lesse eile[5] to þen eien, and is þiccure azein þe wind, and wurse to þurhseon,[6] and halt[7] his heou[8] betere vor winde and for oðer hwat.[9] Lokeð þæt te[10] parlurs beon ever veste[11] on everiche halve,[12] and eke wel istekene[13]; and witeð[14] þer our[15] eien, leste þe heorte etfleo[16] and wende ut, ase of David,[17] and oure soule secli[18] so sone heo is ute. Ich write muchel vor oðre, þæt noðing ne etrineð ou,[19] mine leove sustren, vor nabbe ȝe[20] nout þene nome,[21] ne ne schulen habben, þurh þe grace of Gode, of totinde[22] ancres,[23] ne of tollinde lokunges[24] ne lates,[25] þæt summe, oðer hwules,[26] weilawei! unkundeliche[27] makieð; vor azein kunde[28] hit is, and unmeð[29] sullic[30] wunder, þæt te deade totie,[31] and mid cwike worldes men[32] wede,[33] wið sunne.

'Me[34] leove sire,' seið sum inouh reaðe,[35] 'and is hit nu so overuvel[36] vor te[37] toten utward?' Ȝe hit, leove suster, vor uvel þæt ter[38] kumeð of hit, is uvel over uvel[39] to everich ancre, and nomeliche[40] to þe ȝunge, and to þen old vorðui[41] þæt heo to þe ȝunge ȝiveð uvel vorbisne,[42] and scheld[43] to werien ham mide.[44] Vor, ȝif ei[45] etwit[46] ham, þeonne siggeð heo anon riht[47]: 'Me sire, þeo deð also þeo[48] is betere þen Ich am, and wot betere þen Ich wot hwat heo haveð to donne.' O leove ȝunge ancren, ofte a ful hawur[49] smið smeoðið[50] a ful woc[51] knif, and te wise ouh[52] to volewen wisdom, and nout folie, and an olde ancre mei don wel þæt tu[53] dest uvele. Auh[54] toten ut wiðuten uvel ne mei

1 guard
2 teaches
3 symbol, emblem
4 does
5 ill
6 see through
7 holds, keeps
8 hue, color
9 anything else
10 the
11 fast
12 side
13 shut
14 guard
15 your
16 fly out, escape
17 like David's
18 become sick
19 for nothing [of this] applies to you
20 ye have not
21 the name
22 peering
23 anchoresses
24 enticing looks
25 manners, gestures
26 at times
27 inconsistently
28 against nature
29 exceedingly
30 strange; MS. swuc
31 should look out
32 living men of the world
33 wed
34 my
35 quickly enough
36 very evil
37 to
38 there
39 evil beyond evil
40 especially
41 because
42 example
43 a shield
44 defend themselves with
45 any one
46 reprove, chide
47 straightway
48 she does it also who
49 clever, skilful
50 forges
51 weak, poor
52 ought
53 thou
54 but

nouðer of ou; and nim nu ȝeme[1] hwat uvel beo icumen of totinge: nout on uvel ne two, auh al þe uvel and al þe wo þæt nu is, and ever ȝete was, and ever schal iwurðen[2]—al com of a sihðe. Þet hit beo soð, lo her þe preove[3]: Lucifer, þurh þet he iseih and biheold on himsulf his owene veirness, leop[4] into prude,[5] and bicom of[6] engel atelich[7] deovel; and of Eve, ure alre[8] moder, is iwriten on alre erest,[9] in hire neowe[10] inȝong[11] of hire eiesihðe: *Vidit igitur mulier quod bonum esset lignum ad vescendum, et pulchrum oculis, aspectuque delectabile, et tulit de fructu ejus et comedit, deditque viro,*[12] þæt is: 'Eve biheold o[13] þen vorbodene eppele, and iseih hine[14] veir, and veng[15] to deliten i þe biholdunge, and turnde hire lust þer toward, and nom[16] and et þerof, and ȝef hire loverd.' Lo hu Holi Writ spekeð, and hu inwardliche[17] hit telleð hu sunegunge[18] bigon. Þus eode[19] sihðe bivoren, and makede wei to[20] uvel lust; and com þe deað þerefter, þæt al monkun iveleð.[21] Þes eppel, leove sustren, bitocneð alle þe þing þæt lust falleð[22] to, and delit of sunne. Hwon þu biholdest te mon, þu ert in Eve point[23]: þu lokest o þen eppel.

THE BEAUTY OF SILENCE

Seneca seide: *Ad summam [volo] vos esse rariloquos, tuncque pauciloquos.*[24] Þæt is þe ende of þe tale, seið Seneke the wise: 'Ichulle[25] þæt ȝe speken selde, and þeonne buten lutel.' Auh moni·punt[26] hire word vor te leten mo ut, as me deð water et ter mulne cluse[27]; and so duden Jobes freond[28] þæt weren icumen to vrovren[29] him: seten[30] stille alle seoveniht.[31] Auh þeo[32] [heo] hefden alles bigunne vor to spekene, þeone kuðen heo nevere astunten[33] hore cleppe.[34] Greg.:

[1] take thou heed
[2] come to pass
[3] proof
[4] leaped
[5] pride
[6] instead of
[7] hateful, foul
[8] of us all
[9] first of all
[10] fresh
[11] beginning
[12] Gen. 3.6
[13] looked upon
[14] it
[15] began
[16] took
[17] showing the inward causes
[18] sinning
[19] went
[20] for
[21] feeleth
[22] inclines
[23] in Eve's case
[24] Not found
[25] I will, desire
[26] shut in, restrain
[27] at the mill-dam
[28] friends
[29] comfort
[30] they sat
[31] for a full week
[32] when
[33] they never knew how to stop
[34] talking

Censura silencii nutritura est verbi; so hit is ine monie, ase g... Gregorie seið: 'Silence is wordes fostrild.[1]' *Juge silencium cogit cele... meditari*: 'Long silence, and wel iwust,[2] neded[3] þe þouhtes up touw... þer heovene.' Also ase ȝe muwen iseon þe water, hwon me punt h... and stoppeð[4] bivoren wel,[5] so þet hit ne muwe[6] aduneward, þeonn... is hit ined[7] aȝein vor to climben upward. And ȝe al þisses weis... þundeð[9] ower wordes, and forstoppeð[10] ouwer þouhtes, ase ȝe wulleð... þæt heo climben and hien touward heovene, and nout ne vallen adune-ward, and to vleoten[11] ȝeond[12] te world, ase deð muchel cheafle.[13] Auh... hwon ȝe nede moten[14] speken a lutewiht,[15] leseð up[16] ower muðes r... flodȝeten,[17] ase me deð et ter[18] mulne, and leted[19] adun sone.

THE HAPPINESS OF ANCHORESSES IS LIKE THAT OF THE BIRDS OF HEAVEN

Auh God cleopeð[20] þe gode ancren briddes of heovene, ase Ich er[21] seide: *Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres celi nidos*[22]: 'Voxes hab-beð hore holes, and briddes of heovene hore nestes.' Treowe ancren beoð ariht[23] briddes of heovene þet fleoð an heih, ant sitteð singinde murie[24] o ðe[25] grene bowes; þet is, þencheð[26] upp, and of þe blisse of heovene, þet never ne valeweð,[27] auh is ever grene, and sitteð o þisse grene, singinde swuðe[28] murie; þet is, resteð ham inne swuche þouhte, ...nd habbeð muruhðe of heorte, ase þeo þet singeð. Brid þauh,[29] oðer ...wule,[30] vor te sechen[31] his mete[32] vor þe vlesches neode, lihteð adun ...þer eorðe; auh þeo hwule þet[33] hit sit o þer eorðe, nis hit never ...er, auh biwent[34] him ofte, and bilokeð[35] him ever ȝeorneliche[36] al ...ten. Alriht[37] so, þe gode ancre, ne vleo heo[38] never so heie, heo

...er-mother, nurse
...t
...pels
...check (it)
...
... (flow)
... compelled
...vay
...eck (imperative)

[14] needs must
[15] little
[16] open up
[17] the floodgates of your mouth
[18] at the
[19] let them
[20] calleth
[21] before
[22] Matt. 8. 20
[23] indeed
[24] merrily
[25] on the
[26] meditate

[27] fadeth
[28] very
[29] a bird, however
[30] sometimes
[31] seek
[32] food
[33] the while that, while
[34] turns
[35] looks
[36] carefully, cautiously
[37] just
[38] although she fly

mot lihten oðer hwules adun to þer eorðe of hire bodie, eten, drinken, slepen, wurchen, speken, iheren (of þet neodeð to),[1] of eorðliche þinges. Auh þeonne, as þe brid deð, heo mot wel biseon hire,[2] and biholden hire on ilchere half,[3] þet heo nouhwar ne misnime,[4] leste heo beo ikeiht[5] þuruh summe of þe deofles gronen,[6] oðer ihurt summes weis, þe hwule þæt heo sit so lowe.

THE KINGLY WOOER

A lefdi was[7] þet was mid hire voan[8] biset al abuten, and hire lond al destrued, and heo al poure, wiðinnen one eorðene castle. On[9] mihti kinges luve was, þauh,[10] biturnd upon hire, so unimete[11] swuðe þet he vor wouhlecchunge[12] sende hire his sonden,[13] on efter oðer, and ofte somed monie,[14] and sende hire beaubelet[15] boðe veole[16] and feire, and sukurs[17] of liveneð,[18] and help of his heie hird[19] to holden hire castel. Heo underveng[20] al ase on unrecheleas þing,[21] þet was so herd iheorted þet hire luve ne mihte he never beon þe neorre. Hwat wult tu more? He com himsulf a[22] last, and scheawede hire his feire neb,[23] ase þe[24] þet was of alle men veirest to biholden, and spec[25] swuðe sweteliche and so murie wordes þet heo[26] muhten þe deade arearen[27] vrom deaðe to live, and wrouhte veole wundres, and dude veole meistries[28] bivoren hire eihsihðe, and scheawede hire his mihten; tolde hire of his kinedome, and bead[29] for to makien hire cwene of al þet he ouhte.[30] Al þis ne help nout. Nes[31] þis wunderlich hoker[32]? Vor heo nes never wurðe vor te beon his schelchine.[33] Auh so, þuruh his debonerté,[34] luve hefde overkumen hine þet he seide on ende[35]: 'Dame, þu ert iweorred,[36] and þine von[37] beoð so stronge þet tu ne

[1] so far as is necessary
[2] look about her
[3] on every side
[4] make a mistake
[5] caught
[6] snares
[7] there was
[8] foes
[9] a
[10] however
[11] boundlessly
[12] for wooing, to woo her
[13] messengers
[14] many together
[15] jewels (baubles)
[16] many
[17] help, aid
[18] food
[19] army
[20] received
[21] a heedless creature
[22] at
[23] face, countenance
[24] he
[25] spoke
[26] they
[27] arouse
[28] brave deeds
[29] offered
[30] owned, possessed
[31] is not
[32] contempt, disdain
[33] slave, scullion
[34] graciousness, kindness
[35] finally
[36] attacked, warred against
[37] foes

meiht nones weis,[1] wiðuten sukurs of me, etfleon[2] hore honden, þet heo ne don þe to scheomefule deað. Ich chulle,[3] vor þe luve of þe, nimen þis fiht upon me, and aredden[4] þe of ham þet secheð[5] þine deað. Ich wot, þauh, forsoðe, þet Ich schal bitweonen[6] ham undervongen[7] deaðes wunde, and Ich hit wulle heorteliche vor to ofgon[8] þine heorte. Nu, þeonne, biseche Ich þe, vor þe luve þet Ich kuðe þe,[9] þet tu luvie me, hure and hure[10] efter þen ilke deaðe,[11] hwon þu noldes lives.[12]' Þes king dude al þus — aredde hire of alle hire von, and was himsulf to wundre[13] ituked,[14] and isleien on ende.[15] Þuruh miracle, þauh, he aros from deaðe to live. Nere[16] þeos ilke lefdi of uvele kunnes kunde,[17] ȝif heo over alle þing[18] ne luve him herefter?

Þes king is Jesu Crist, Godes Sune, þet al o þisse wise[19] wowude[20] ure soule, þet þe deoflen heveden biset. And he, ase noble woware, efter monie messagers and feole[21] god deden, com vor to preoven his luve, and scheawede þuruh knihtschipe[22] þet he was luve-wurðe,[23] ase weren sumewhule[24] knihtes iwuned[25] for to donne. He dude him ine[26] turnement, and hefde, vor his leofmonnes[27] luve, his schelde ine vihte,[28] ase kene kniht, on everiche half iþurled.[29]

THE ANCHORESS' CAT, HER CLOTHING AND OCCUPATIONS

Ȝe, mine leove sustren, ne schulen habben no best[30] bute kat one.[31] Ancre þet haveð eihte[32] þuncheð[33] bet[34] husewif, ase Marthe was, þen ancre; ne none wise ne mei heo beon Marie,[35] mid griðfulnesse[36] of heorte. Vor þeonne mot[37] heo þenchen of þe kues[38] foddre, and of

1 in no way
2 escape from
3 will
4 deliver
5 seek; MS. schecheð
6 amongst
7 receive
8 deserve, win
9 show thee
10 at least
11 MS. dead deaðe
12 in life
13 wonderfully, grievously
14 maltreated, injured
15 finally
16 were not
17 of a perverse sort of nature
18 above all things
19 in this manner
20 wooed
21 many
22 knightly prowess
23 worthy of love; MS. -wurde
24 sometimes
25 wont
26 entered into
27 sweetheart, lady
28 in the fight
29 pierced in all parts
30 beast, animal
31 except only a cat
32 cattle
33 seems
34 better
35 Mary
36 peace
37 must
38 cow's

[illegible]; ne heiward,[3] warien[4] hwon me punt [illegible] [illegible]es.[6] Wat Crist,[7] þis is lodlich þing [illegible] of ancre eihte. Þauh, ȝif eni mot nede habben ku, loke þet heo none monne ne eilic,[9] ne ne hermie,[10] ne þet hire þouht ne beo nout þeron ivestned.[11] Ancre ne ouh[12] nout to habben no þing þet drawe utward hire heorte. None cheffare[13] ne drive[14] ȝe. Ancre þet is cheapild,[15] heo cheapeð[16] hire soule þe chepmon[17] of helle. Ne wite[18] ȝe nout in oure[19] huse of oðer monnes þinges, ne eihte, ne cloðes; ne nout ne undervo[20] ȝe þe chirche vestimenz, ne þene caliz,[21] bute-ȝif[22] strencðe hit makie,[23] oðer muchel eie,[24] vor of swuche witunge[25] is ikumen muchel uvel oftesiðen.[26] Wiðinnen ower woanes[27] ne lete ȝe nenne mon slepen. Ȝif muchel neode mid alle[28] makeð breken[29] ower hus, þe hwule þet hit ever is ibroken, loke þet ȝe habben þerinne mid ou one wummon of clene live deies and nihtes.[30]

Vorði[31] þet no mon ne isihð ou, ne ȝe iseoð nenne mon, wel mei don of[32] ower cloðes, beon heo hwite, beon heo blake; bute þet heo beon unorne[33] and warme, and wel iwrouhte—velles[34] wel itauwed,[35] and habbeð ase monie ase ou toneodeð,[36] to bedde and eke to rugge.[37] Nexst fleshe ne schal mon werien no linene cloð, bute-ȝif hit beo of herde[38] and of greate heorden.[39] Stamin[40] habbe hwose wule, and hwose wule mei beon buten.[41] Ȝe schulen liggen in on heater,[42] and igurd.[43] Ne bere[44] ȝe non iren,[45] ne here,[46] ne irspiles[47] felles; ne ne

[1] herdsman's hire
[2] flatter
[3] hayward (keeper of the hedges, who prevented cattle from injuring private property)
[4] defend herself
[5] they shut it up
[6] pay the damages, moreover
[7] Christ knows
[8] they make complaint
[9] annoy
[10] harm
[11] fixed
[12] ought
[13] traffic, business
[14] carry on
[15] trafficker
[16] sells
[17] to the bargainer
[18] take charge
[19] your
[20] receive
[21] chalice
[22] unless
[23] make necessary
[24] fear
[25] guarding, care-taking
[26] ofttimes
[27] dwelling
[28] after all
[29] to be used
[30] by day and night
[31] because
[32] do with, be content with
[33] plain
[34] skins
[35] tawed, dressed
[36] you need
[37] also for your back
[38] hards, tow
[39] coarse canvas
[40] harsh rough cloth, used for penitential shirts (cf. F. *étamine*)
[41] without
[42] a garment
[43] girt
[44] wear
[45] iron
[46] haircloth
[47] porcupines'

beate ou þermide,[1] ne mid schurge[2] ileðered[3] ne ileaded,[4] ne mid holie,[5] ne mid breres[6]; ne ne biblodge hiresulf[7] wiðuten schriftes[8] leave; ne ne nime, et enes, to veole[9] disceplines.[10] Ower schone beon[11] greate and warme. Ine sumer ȝe habbeð leave vor to gon and sitten barvot, and[12] hosen wiðuten vaumpez,[13] and ligge ine ham hwoso likeð.[14] Ʒif ȝe muwen beon wimpelleas,[15] beoð bi[16] warme keppen[17] and þeruppon blake veiles. Hwose wule beon isein, þauh heo atiffe[18] hire nis nout muchel wunder; auh to Godes eien heo is lufsumere, þet is, vor þe luve of him, untiffed wiðuten. Ring ne broche nabbe ȝe, ne gurdel imenbred,[19] ne gloven, ne no swuch þing þet ou ne deih[20] for to habben.

Ever me is leovere so[21] ȝe don gretture werkes. Ne makie none purses, vor te vreonden ou mide,[22] ne blodbendes[23] of seolke, auh schepieð,[24] and seouweð,[25] and amendeð[26] chirche cloðes, and poure monne cloðes. No þing ne schule ȝe ȝiven wiðuten schriftes leave. Helpeð mid ower owune swinke,[27] so vorð so[28] ȝe muwen, to schruden[29] ou sulven and þeo þet ou serveð, ase Seint Jerome lereð.[30]

THE ANCHORESS' HEALTH

Ʒe ne schulen senden lettres, ne undervon lettres, ne writen uten leave. Ʒe schulen beon idodded[31] four siðen i ðe ȝere, vor to lihten ower heaved[32]; and ase ofte ileten blod,[33] and oftere ȝif neod is; and hwoso mei beon þer wiðuten,[34] Ich hit mei wel iðolien.[35] Hwon ȝe beoð ileten blod, ȝe ne schulen don no þing, þeo þreo dawes, þet ou greve,[36] auh talkeð mid ouer meidenes and mid þeaufule[37] talen schurteð[38] ou

1 therewith
2 scourge
3 made of leather
4 leaded
5 holly
6 briars
7 let her not cause herself to bleed
8 of the confessor
9 too many
10 flagellations
11 let your shoes be
12 and (to wear)
13 vamps
14 whoever likes may lie in them
15 without wimples
16 be provided with
17 capes
18 adorn
19 linked
20 you ought not
21 I am always more pleased if
22 gain you friends with
23 bandages to stop bleeding
24 fashion
25 sew
26 mend
27 labor
28 so far as
29 clothe
30 teacheth
31 have your hair clipped
32 your head
33 have blood let
34 be able to be without this
35 suffer, permit
36 that may grieve you, be disagreeable to you
37 edifying
38 divert

togederes. Ȝe muwen don so ofte hwon ou þuncheð hevie,[1] oðer beoð vor sume worldliche þinge sorie oðer seke. So wisliche witeð ou[2] in our[3] blodletunge, and holdeð ou ine swuche reste þet ȝe longe þerefter muwen ine Godes servise þe monluker[4] swinken, and also hwon ȝe iveleð eni secnesse; vor muchel sotschipe[5] hit is vor to vorleosen,[6] vor one deie, tene oðer tweolve.

A TREATISE AGAINST MIRACLE-PLAYS

This tract, in the form of a sermon, was first printed by Halliwell (in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* 2. 42 ff.) from a manuscript volume of sermons in the library of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London. This is now British Museum MS. Add. 24,202, which is designated in the catalogue as 'Wycliffite Tracts in English.' The manuscript is described as a small folio, vellum, of the end of the fourteenth century. Unless otherwise stated, the readings given below repose upon my collation of this manuscript. As there is considerable variation in the orthography, I have sought to render it more consistent, especially in the endings. Emendations marked 'M' are those of Mätzner in his *Altenglische Sprachproben*; the others are mine.

The following selections give the main argument of the tract, which is headed: 'Here bigynnis a tretise of miraclis-pleyinge.' The outline which follows may help to make the argument clear. Detailed notes can be found in Mätzner's edition.

I. Introduction. Christ's miracles were performed in earnest, and therefore ought not to be represented in play.
   1. Such representation takes away our fear of God, and, as a result, the strength of our faith.
   2. It contradicts the teaching of Christ.
   3. It leads to scorn of God: the players make sport of his passion.

II. There are six arguments in favor of miracle-plays. Men say:
   1. They are given for the sake of worship.
   2. By them many are converted to a good life, seeing, as they do, the manifest work of the devil.
   3. Often the sight of Christ's passion moves men to tears.
   4. Some men may be drawn to religion through play, who would never be moved by seriousness.
   5. Men must have some recreation; why not that of a good sort?
   6. We do not object to paintings of miracles; why, then, to dramatic portrayals of them?

III. But there are answers to all these arguments:
   1. The giving of such plays springs from heathenism, and is not worship. Worship consists in doing the will of God.

[1] you are in low spirits [2] guard yourselves [3] your [4] more vigorously [5] folly [6] lose

2. Though good may sometimes come of evil, this is not the rule. Miracle-plays most often pervert those who see them.
3. If the spectators weep, it is purely from external causes, not from consciousness of their own sin.
4. If men are ever converted by miracle-plays, it is only to show the grace of God. But men are seldom converted by such means; conversion comes from the earnest working of God, not from playing.
5. Plays do not afford true recreation.
6. Good paintings merely exhibit truth, but plays are mainly to delight men's bodily senses.

IV. A friend declares:
1. That he will not abandon his interest in miracle-plays unless their sinfulness can be proved directly from Holy Writ.
   Answer: Such plays are against the spirit of the commandment, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' (Illustration: One would not represent in a play the death of one's own father.)
2. That if the giving of such plays is sin, it is but a small sin.
   Answer: Any sin, however small, is deadly sin.
   Moreover, the danger in such playing is shown by the analogy of the following stories, with their mediæval allegorical interpretations:
   a. Ishmael and Isaac (Gen. 21. 8–10).
   b. The children of Abner and those of Joab (2 Sam. 2. 12–32).
   c. Moses and the children of Israel (Exod. 32).
   d. Elisha (2 Kings 2. 23–4).
   e. Noah (as referred to in Matt. 24. 38–9).

V. If we are to play, let us do so in the spirit of David (2 Sam. 6. 15–6, 20–2), (1) realizing how God's grace to us surpasses that to our neighbors; (2) being always devout before God, though misliked by the world; (3) being lowly in our own eyes.

Knowe ȝee, Cristen men, þat as Crist, God and man, is boþe weye, trewþ, and lif,[1] as seiþ þe gospel of Jon (weye to þe errynge, trewþe to þe unknowyng and doutyng, lif to þe styynge[2] to hevene and weryinge[3]), so Crist dyde[4] noþinge to us but ef[f]ectuely in weye of mercy, in treuþe of ri[ȝ]twesnes, and in lif of ȝildyng[5] everlastynge joye for oure continuely[6] mo[u]rnyng and sorwynge in þis valey of teeres.[7] Þe[8] myraclis, þerfore, þat Crist dyde[4] heere in erþe, ouþer in[9] hymsilf ouþer in hise seyntis, weren so ef[f]ectuel and in ernest don,[10] þat to synful men þat erren þei brouȝten forȝyvenesse of synne, settynge hem in þe weye of riȝt bileve; to doutouse[11] men not stedefast þei brouȝten in kunnyng[12] to betere plesen God, and verry hope

[1] John 14.6
[2] those climbing upward
[3] growing weary
[4] MS. dude
[5] yielding
[6] MS. continuiely
[7] Ps. 84.6 (in the Latin)
[8] MS. in (em. M.)
[9] through
[10] MS. done
[11] doubting
[12] ability

in God to ben[1] stedefast in hym; and to þe wery of þe wey[e] God, for þe grette penaunce and suffraunce of þe trybulac[i]oun men moten[2] han[3] þerinne, þei brougten in love of brynnyn[g] charite, to þe whiche alle þing is ligt,[5] and[6] were[7] he to suff[re] deþe, þe whiche men most dreden, for þe everlastynge lyf and þat men most loven and desiren[9]: of þe whiche þing verry [b]... puttiþ awey alle werinesse heere in þe weye of God. Þanne, syþ[en] myraclis of Crist and of hyse seyntis weren þus effectuel, as by ... bileve we ben in certeyn,[11] no man shulde usen in bourde[12] ... pley[13] þe myraclis and werkis þat Crist so ernestfully[14] wrougte to ... helþe[15]; for whoevere so do[i]þ, he erriþ in þe byleve, reversiþ[16] C[rist] and scorniþ[17] God. He erriþ in þe bileve, for in þat he takiþ þe ... precious werkis of God in pley and bourde, he[18] takiþ his nam[e in] idil,[19] and so mysusiþ oure byleve. A, Lord! syþen an erþely serv[aunt] dar not taken[20] in pley and in bourde þat þat his[21] erþely lord t[akiþ] in ernest, myche more we shulden not maken oure pley[13] and bo[urde] of þo myraclis and werkis þat God so ernestfully wrougt[e] to ... for,[22] soþely whan we so don,[23] drede to synne[24] is taken[20] awey, ... a servaunt whan he bourdiþ[25] wiþ his mayster leesiþ[26] his dred[e to] offenden[27] hym, namely, whanne he bourdiþ wiþ his mayster in þat[28] his mayster takiþ in ernest. . . .

Þanne, syþen þes myraclis-pleyeris taken in bourde þe erne[st] werkis of God, no doute þat þei ne[29] scornen God, as dyden[30] þe J[ewis] þat bobbiden[31] Crist; for þei lowen[32] at his passioun, as þese lawg[hen] and japen at[34] þe myraclis of God. Þerfore, as þei scorniden[35] C[rist], so þese[36] scorne[n] God; and rigt[37] as Pharao, wrooþ[38] to do[n] ...

1 MS. been
2 must needs
3 MS. have
4 burning
5 easy
6 if
7 MS. omits were; M. he were
8 MS. suffere
9 MS. di-
10 since
11 assured
12 game, sport
13 MS. pleye
14 MS. ernyst-
15 salvation
16 contradicts
17 MS. -yþ
18 MS. and so
19 vain
20 MS. -un
21 MS. her (em. M.)
22 MS. ffor
23 MS. done
24 of sinning
25 jests, makes merry
26 loses
27 MS. -yn
28 MS. in þat in þat
29 MS. ne þei
30 MS. diden
31 mocked, made sp...
32 laughed
33 MS. lowyn
34 MS. of
35 MS. -eden
36 MS. þeese
37 just
38 hating

þat God bad hym, dispiside God,[1] so þese myraclis-pleyeris and mayntenours,[2] leevynge plesingly[3] to do[n] þat God biddiþ hem, scornen God. He, forsoþe, haþ beden us alle to halowen[4] his name, ȝyvyng drede and reverence in alle mynde[5] of his werkis, wiþoute ony pleying[e] or japynge, as al holynesse is in ful ernest men; þanne, pleyinge þe name of Goddis myraclis,[6] as plesyngly þei leeve[n] to do[n] þat God biddiþ hem, so þei scornen his name, and so scornen[7] hym.

But hereaȝenus[8] þei seyen [1] þat þei pleyen þese myraclis in þe worschip of God, and so dyden not þese Jewis þat bobbiden Crist. Also, [2] ofte siþis[9] by siche myraclis-pleyinge ben[10] men convertid to gode lyvynge, as men and wymmen, seyng in myraclis-pleyinge þat þe devul by þer aray, by þe whiche þei moven eche on oþere[11] to leccherie and to pride, makiþ hem his servauntis to bryngen hemsilf and many oþere to helle, and to han[12] fer more vylenye herafter, by[13] þer proude aray heere, þan þei han worschipe heere; and seynge,[14] ferþermore, þat al þis worldly beyng heere is but vanite for a while — as is myraclis-pleying[e] — þei[15] leeven þer pride, and taken to hem afterward þe meke conversac[i]oun of Crist and of hise seyntis, and so myraclis-pleyinge turniþ[16] men to þe bileve, and not perverteþ.[17] Also, [3] ofte syþis by siche myraclis-pleyinge men and wymmen, seynge þe passioun of Crist and of hise seyntis, ben movyd to compassion and devocion, wepynge bitere teris; þanne þei ben not scornynge of God, but worschipyng. Also, [4] profitable[18] to men and to þe worschipe of God it is to fulfillen[19] and sechen alle þe menes by þe whiche men mowen[20] fleen[21] synne, and drawen hem to vertues. And syþen as[22] þer ben men þat on[e]ly by ernestful doynge wylen be[n] convertid to God, so þer ben[23] oþere men þat wylen not be[n] convertid to God but by gamen and pley; and now on dayes[24] men ben not convertid by þe ernestful doyng of God ne of men, þanne[25] now

1 Exod. 7. 13 ff.
2 those who defend and support them
3 omitting for the sake of pleasure
4 MS. -yn
5 remembrance
6 MS. miraclis
7 MS. -yn
8 in opposition to this
9 ofttimes
10 are
11 each one the other
12 have
13 because of
14 MS. seeynge
15 MS. wherþoru þie
16 MS. -eþ
17 does not pervert them
18 MS. proph-
19 MS. -un
20 may
21 MS. seene; M. fle
22 whereas
23 MS. been
24 nowadays
25 therefore

it is tyme and skilful[1] to assayen to converten[2] þe puple by pley and gamen — as by myraclis-pleyinge, and oþer maner myrþis. Also, [5] summe recreac[i]oun men moten[3] han; and bettere it is, or lesse yvele, þat þei han þeyre recreac[i]oun[4] by pleyinge of myraclis þan by pleyinge of oþer[e] japis. Also, [6] siþen it is leveful[5] to han þe myraclis of God peyntid, why is [it] not as wel leveful to han þe myraclis of God pleyid,[6] syþen men mowen bettere reden þe wille of God, and his mervelous werkis, in þe pleyinge of hem þan in þe peyntynge, and betere þei ben holden in men[n]us mynde, and oftere rehersid, by þe pleyinge of hem þan by þe peyntynge, for þis is a deed bok, þe toþer a qu[i]ck[7]?

To þe first reson we answeren,[8] seying [1] þat siche myraclis-pleyinge is not to þe worschipe of God, for þei ben don more to ben seen of þe worlde, and to plesen[9] to þe world, þanne to ben seen of God, or to plesen[9] to hym. As Crist never ensaumplide hem,[10] but onely heþene men, þat everemore dishonouren God, seyinge þat to þe worschipe of God þat is to þe most veleynye[11] of hym; þerfore, as þe wickidnesse of þe misbileve of heþene men lyiþ to hemsilf[12] whanne þei seyn þat þe wors[c]hipyng of þeire maumetrie[13] is to þe worschipe of God, so mennus[14] lec[c]herye now on dayes, to han þer owne lustus, liiþ[15] to hemsilf whanne þei seyn þat siche[16] miraclis[17]-pleying[e] is to þe worschip of God. . . .

[2] Þe same wise,[18] myraclis-pleyinge, albeit þat it be synne, is oþerewhile[19] occasion of convertyng of men; but as it is synne, it is fer more occasion of pervertyng of men, not onely of oon synguler[20] persone, but of al an hool comynte,[21] as it makiþ al a puple to ben ocupied in veyn aȝenus þis heeste[22] of þe Psauter Book, þat seiþ to alle men, and namely to pristis, þat eche day reden it in þer servyse, 'Turne awey myn eyen þat þei se[n] not vanytees[23]'; and efte[24]

1 reasonable
2 MS. -yn
3 must
4 em. M.
5 permissible
6 MS. -ed
7 living
8 MS. -yng (em. M.)
9 MS. -yn
10 taught their use by example
11 degradation
12 deceive themselves; MS. þemsilf
13 idols
14 men's
15 MS. lieþ
16 MS. suche
17 MS. -es
18 in the same manner
19 sometimes
20 single
21 community
22 command
23 Ps. 119. 37
24 again

'Lord, þou hatist[1] alle waytynge vanytees.[2]' How þanne may a prist pleyn in entirludies,[3] or ȝyve hymsilf to þe siȝt of hem? . . .

Myraclis-pleyinge, syþen it is aȝenus þe heest of God, þat biddiþ þat *þou shalt not take*[n] *Goddis name in ydil*, it is aȝenus oure bileve, and so it may not ȝyven occasioun[4] of turnynge men to þe bileve, but of pervertyng; and þerfore many men wenen[5] þat þer is no helle of everelastynge peyne, but þat God do[i]þ but[6] þreten[7] us, and not to do[n] it in dede—as is[8] pleyinge of myraclis[9] in sygne,[10] and not in dede. . . .

A prist of þe Newe Testament, þat is passid þe tyme of childehod, and þat not onely shulde kepe[n] chastite, but alle oþere vertues, ne[11] onely mynystren þe sacrament of matrimonye, but alle oþere sacramentis, and, namely,[12] syþen hym owiþ[13] to mynystre[n] to alle þe puple þe precious body of Crist, awȝte[14] to abstene[n] hym fro al ydil pleying[e], boþe of myraclys and ellis.[15] . . .

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þe pley of Cristis passioun, leevynge to wepen[1] for þe synnes of hemsilf and of þeire chyldren, as Crist bad þe wymmen þat wepten on hym.[2]

And by þis we answeren to þe furþe resoun, seyinge [4] þat no man may be convertid to God but onely by þe ernestful doinge[3] of God, and by noon veyn pleying[e]; for þat þat[4] þe word of God worchiþ not, ne his sacramentis, how shulde pleyinge worchen, þat is of no vertue, but ful of defaute? . . . Þe wepyng þat men wepen ofte in siche pley, comunely is fals, witnessinge[5] þat þei loven[6] more þe lykyng[7] of þeire body, and of prosperite of þe world, þan lykynge of[8] God, and prosperite of vertu[e] in þe soule; and, þerfore, havyng more compassion of peyne þan of synne, þei falsly wepen[9] for lakkynge of bodily prosperite, more þan for lakkyng of gostly. . . .

And herby we answeren to þe fifte resoun, seyinge [5] þat verry recreacion is leeveful ocupiynge in lasse[10] werkis, to more ardently worchen[11] grettere werkis; and þerfore siche myraclis-pleyinge, ne þe sizte of hem,[12] is no verrey recreacion,[13] but fals and worldly, as proven[14] þe dedis of þe fautours[15] of siche pleyis. . . . And zif men axen what recreac[i]oun men shulden han[16] on þe haliday, after þeire holy contemplacioun in þe chirche, we seyen to hem two þingis: oon, þat zif he hadde ver[r]yly ocupied[17] hym in contemplac[i]oun byforn, neyþer he wolde aske[n] þat question, ne han wille[18] to se[n][19] vanyte; anoþere, we seyn þat his recreacioun shulde ben in þe werkis of mercy to his neyebore, and in delityng[20] hym in alle good comunicacion wiþ his ney[e]bore, as biforn he delitid[21] hym in God; and in alle oþere nedeful werkis þat reson and kynde[22] axen.

And to þe last reson we seyn [6] þat peinture,[23] zif it[24] be verry, wiþoute mengyng[25] of lesyngis,[26] and not to curious to[27] myche fedynge mennus wittis, and not occasion of maumetrie[28] to þe puple, þei ben but as nakyd lettris to a clerk to reden[29] þe treuþe; but so

1 omitting to weep
2 Luke 23.28
3 MS. doyinge
4 which
5 MS. falf wittnessenge
6 MS. -yn
7 pleasure, enjoyment
8 MS. in
9 MS. -yn
10 smaller
11 MS. worschen
12 (miracle-plays)
13 MS. -sion
14 MS. -yn
15 patrons
16 MS. have
17 MS. -ede
18 desire
19 see
20 MS. di-
21 MS. di-
22 nature
23 painting
24 MS. zif it it
25 mingling
26 falsehoods
27 intent upon
28 idolatry
29 MS. riden (em. M.

ben not myraclis-pleyingis,[1] þat ben made more to deliten men bodily þan to ben bokis to lewid[2] men, and þerfore ȝif þei ben quike[3] bookis, þei ben quike bookis to schrewidnesse,[4] more þan to godnesse.[5] Gode men, þerfore, seinge þer tyme to[6] schort to ocupyen hem in gode ernest werkis, and seinge þe day of þer rekenynge neyȝen[7] faste, and unknowyng whan þei schulen[8] go[n] hennys, fleen alle siche ydilnessis, hyinge[9] þat þei weren[10] wiþ þer[11] spouse, Crist, in þe blisse of hevene. . . .

[Ȝ]if þou haddist had[12] a fadir þat hadde suffrid[13] a dispitous[14] deþ to geten þee þyn heritage, and þou þerafter woldest so liȝtly ber[e]n[15] it, to make[n] þerof a pley to þe[16] and to alle þe puple, no doute[17] but þat alle gode men wolden demen[18] þe unkynde. Miche more, God and alle his seyntis[19] demen[18] alle þo[20] Cristen men unkynde þat pleyen or favouren þe pley of þe deþ or of þe myraclis[21] of þer most kynde Fadir, Crist, þat dyede and wrouȝte myraclis to bryngen men to þe everelastande heretage of hevene.

But peraventure heere þou seist þat, [ȝ]if[22] pleyinge of myraclis be synne, never þe latere[23] it is but litil synne. But herfore,[24] dere frend, knowe ȝee þat eche synne, be it never so litil, [ȝ]if it be mayntenyd and prechid as gode and profitable, is deadly[25] synne; and þerfore seiþ þe prophete[26]: 'Wo to hem þat seien good[27] yvel, and yvel good[28]!' and þerfore þe wyse man dampniþ[29] hem þat gladen[30] whan þei don yvel; and þerfore alle seyntis seyen þat mannysch[31] it is to fallen, but develiche it is to abyden stille þerinne. Þerfore, siþen þis[32] myraclis-pleyinge is synne, as þou knowlechist,[33] and is stedefastly meyntenyd, and also men deliten hem þerinne, no doute[17] but þat it is deadly synne, dampnable — develiche, not mannysch. . . .

1 MS. -inge
2 ignorant, unlearned
3 living
4 wickedness; MS. -ide-
5 MS. gode-
6 too
7 draw near
8 MS. schal
9 hastening
10 might be
11 MS. her
12 MS. hadde
13 MS. -ed
14 cruel; MS. -ouse
15 so disregard
16 for thyself
17 MS. dowte
18 MS. denyen
19 MS. -es
20 those
21 MS. -es
22 MS. of
23 nevertheless
24 in consideration of this
25 MS. deadely
26 MS. -ite
27 MS. gode
28 *Isa.* 5. 20
29 condemneth; MS. -eþ
30 rejoice
31 human; MS. -ysche
32 MS. þes
33 dost acknowledge

As þis is a verre lesynge to seyen þat for þe love of God he w ben a good felawe[1] wiþ þe devul, so it is a verry[2] lesyng to seyc þat for þe love of God he wil pleyen his myraclis — for in neyþer. þe love of God schewid, but his hestis tobroken.[3] And syþen þe cer monyes[4] of þe olde lawe — albeit þat þei weren ȝyven bi God — fo þei weren fleyshly, shulden[5] not be[n] holde[n][6] wiþ þe Newe Test ment, for it is gostly[7]; myche more pleyinge, for it is fleys[h]l never beden[8] of God, shulde not ben don wiþ þe mervelouse werk of God, for þei ben gostly; for as þe pleyinge[9] of Ismael wiþ Isa shulde han[10] bynomen[11] Isaac his heretage, so[12] þe kepyng of þe cer monyes[4] of þe olde lawe in þe Newe Testament shulde han bynome men þer bileve in Crist, and han made men to gon bacward — þat to seie[n], fro þe gostly lyvyng of þe Newe Testament to þe fleysh lyvyng of þe Olde Testament. . . .

Þis myraclis-pleyinge is verre witnesse[13] of mennus averice an coveytise byfore, þat is maumetrie, as seiþ þe Apostele[14]; for þat þat þei shulden spenden[16] upon þe nedis of þer neȝeboris, þei spenden upo þe pleyis; and to peyen þer rente and þer dette þei wolen grucche[n], and to spende[n] two so myche[18] upon þer pley þei wolen noþin grucchen. Also, to gaderen[19] men togidere to bien þe derre þe vetailis,[20] and to stiren men to glotonye, and to pride and boost,[21] þ pleyn þes myraclis; and, also, to han wherof to spenden on þe myraclis, and to holde[n] felawschipe of glotenye and lec[c]herie siche[22] dayes of myraclis-pleyinge, þei bisien hem beforn to mo gredily bygilen þer neȝ[e]bors in byinge and in sellyng; and so þ pleyinge of myraclis now on dayes is verre[23] witnesse of hidous coveytise, þat is maumetrie.

[1] MS. felowe
[2] MS. werry
[3] MS. -un
[4] MS. sery-
[5] MS. þei shulden
[6] ranked
[7] of the spirit
[8] bidden; MS. -yn
[9] Gen. 21. 9 (*ludentem*, Vulgate; see the Authorized Version)
[10] might have
[11] taken from; MS. -yn
[12] MS. so in þe
[13] MS. witt-
[14] Col. 3. 5
[15] which
[16] MS. -yn
[17] grudge
[18] twice as much
[19] MS. gideren
[20] buy their food the dear
[21] boasting
[22] MS. sicsse
[23] MS. werre
[24] MS. hidoous

MIRK, INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARISH PRIESTS

The *Instructions for Parish Priests* is a versified translation of the *Pupilla Oculi* of William de Pagula (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.v. Mirk). Its author, who was prior of Lilleshall in Shropshire, wrote also, besides a Latin *Manuale Sacerdotum*, the *Liber Festialis*, an English book of sermons which was decidedly popular, being printed eighteen times between 1483 and 1532 (Schofield, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, p. 395). Nothing more is known of Mirk's life; the date 1403 as the time at which he flourished is conjectural.

The following selections are from Peacock's print (E.E.T.S. 31, London, 1868; revised, 1902) of MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Claud. A. 2, which he supposes to be not later than 1450, and to represent the language of an earlier time. The pages are respectively, with the exception of the third from the end, 2, 9–10, 14, 32, 43, 66–7, and 60, of the edition of 1902; the antepenultimate, 21–3 of the edition of 1868.

THE CHARACTER OF A PRIEST

Preste, þyself thow moste be chast,
And say þy serves wyþowten hast,
That mowthe and herte acorden ifere,[1]
Ȝef thow wole that God þe here.
Of honde and mowþe þou moste be trewe,
And grete oþes thow moste enchewe[2];
In worde and dede þou moste be mylde,
Bothe to mon and to chylde.
Dronkelec[3] and glotonye,
Pruyde and slouþe and envye,
Alle þow moste putten away,
Ȝef þow wolt serve God to pay.[4]
That þe nedeth, ete and drynke,
But sle[5] þy lust for any thynge.
Tavernes also thow moste forsake,
And marchaundyse þow schalt not make;
Wrastelynge, and schotynge,[6] and suche maner game,[7]

1 agree (*lit.* accord together)
2 eschew
3 drunkenness
4 please
5 slay, crush
6 shooting
7 sports of such sort

Thow myȝte not use[1] wythowte blame;
Hawkynge, huntynge, and dawnsynge,
Thow moste forgo for any thynge;
Cuttede[2] clothes and pykede[3] schone,
Thye gode fame þey wole fordone.[4]
Marketes and feyres I the forbede,
But[5] hyt be for the more[6] nede.
In honeste[7] clothes thow moste gon:
Baselarde[8] ny bawdryke[9] were þow non.
Berde and crowne thow moste be schave,
Ȝef thow wole thy ordere save.
Of mete and drynke þow moste be fre[10]
To pore and ryche, by[11] thy degre.
Ȝerne[12] thow moste thy Sawtere[13] rede,
And of the Day of Dome have drede;
And evere do gode aȝeynes[14] evele,
Or elles thow myȝte not lyve wele.

BEHAVIOR IN CHURCH

No non in chyrche stonde schal,
Ny[15] lene to pyler ny to wal,
But fayre[16] on kneus þey schule hem sette —
Knelynge doun upon the flette[17] —
And pray to God wyth herte meke
To ȝeve hem grace, and mercy eke.
Soffere hem to make no bere,[18]
But ay to be in here[19] prayere;

[1] practise
[2] cut short (?)
[3] long-toed
[4] make way with
[5] unless
[6] greater
[7] decent, simple
[8] short sword, dagger
[9] sword-belt
[10] generous
[11] according to
[12] earnestly, zealously
[13] Psalter
[14] in return for
[15] nor
[16] properly
[17] floor
[18] noise
[19] their

4. pykede: 'The pikes were sometimes made like the tails of scorpions, at others twisted into the form of a ram's horn' (Peacock's note, ed. 1902, p. 73).

And whenne þe gospelle ired[1] be schalle,
Teche hem þenne to stonde up alle,
And blesse[2] feyre as þey conne
Whenne 'Gloria tibi'[3] ys bygonne.
And whenne þe Gospel ys idone,
Teche hem eft to knele downe sone;
And whenne they here the belle rynge
To that holy sakerynge,[4]
Teche hem knele downe, boþe ȝonge and olde,
And boþe here hondes up to holde,
And say þenne in þys manere,
Feyre and softely, wythowte bere:
'Jesu, Lord, welcome þow be,
In forme of bred as I þe se.
Jesu, for thy holy name,
Schelde me to-day fro synne and schame.
Schryfte[5] and howsele,[6] Lord, þou graunte me bo,[7]
Er that I schale hennes go,
And verre[8] contrycyone of my synne,
That I, Lord, never dye thereinne;
And, as þow were of a may[9] ibore,[10]
Sofere[11] me never to be forlore,[12]
But whenne þat I schale hennes wende,
Grawnte me þe blysse wythowten ende.'

THE CREED

I beleve in oure holy Dryȝt,[13]
Fader of hevene, God almyȝt,
Þat alle thynge has wroȝt—
Hevene and erþe, and alle of noȝt.
On Jesu Cryst I beleve also,

1 read
2 make the sign of the cross
3 'Glory be to thee, O God,' sung between the Epistle and the Gospel
4 consecration of the elements
5 confession and absolution
6 receiving of the Eucharist
7 both
8 true
9 maiden
10 born
11 suffer
12 lost
13 Lord

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13 Lord

Hys only Sone, and no mo,
Þat was conceyvede of þe Holy Spyryt,
And of a mayde ibore quyt[1];
And afterward under Pounce Pylate
Was itake[2] for vye[3] and hate,
And soffrede peyne and passyone,
And on þe croys was idone[4];
Ded and buryed he was also,
And wente to helle to spoyle[5] oure fo,
And ros to lyve the þryde day,
And stegh[6] to hevene þe xl day.
Ȝet he schale come wyþ woundes rede,
To deme[7] þe quyke and þe dede.
In þe Holy Gost I leve[8] welle;
In Holy Chyrche and hyre spelle.[9]
In Goddes body I beleve nowe,
Amonge hys seyntes to ȝeve me rowe,[10]
And of my synnes þat I have done
To have plenere[11] remyssyone;
And when my body from deth schal ryse
I leve to be wyth God and hyse,[12]
And have the joye þat lasteþ ay;
God graunte hymself þat I so may!

THE VANITIES OF THE FLESH

Hast þou ben prowde and glad in thoght
Of any mysdede þat þou hast wroȝt?
Hast þou ben prowde of any gyse[13]
Of any þynge þat þou dedust use,
Of party[14] hosen, of pykede schone,
Of fytered[15] cloþes (as foles done)

[1] quite
[2] seized
[3] envy
[4] done to death
[5] despoil
[6] ascended
[7] judge
[8] believe
[9] teaching
[10] rest
[11] full, complete
[12] his
[13] appearance, lo[illegible]
[14] party-colored
[15] [illegible]

Of londes rentes, of gay howsynge,[1]
Of mony servauntes to þy byddynge,
Or of hors fat and rownde,
Or for þy godes[2] were hole and sownde,
Or for þow art gret and ryche
Þat no neȝbore ys þe ilyche,[3]
Or for þow art a vertues mon,
And const[4] more þen anoþer con?
Ȝef þou have be[5] on þys maner prowd,
Schryf[6] þe, sone, and telle hyt out.

SINS OF CARELESSNESS

Hast þow icome by chyrcheȝorde,[7]
And for þe dede iprayed no worde?
Hast þow ay cast up[8] lydeȝate[9]
Þere bestus have go in ate?
Hast þow istruyed[10] corn or gras,
Or oþer þynge þat sowen was?
Hast þou icome in any sty,[11]
And cropped ȝerus[12] of corne þe by?
Art þou iwont over corn to ryde,
When þou myȝtest have go bysyde?

THE PRONOUNCING OF EXCOMMUNICATION

Þe grete sentens I wryte þe here,
Þat foure tymes in þe ȝere
Þou schalte pronownce withowtyn lette,[13]
Whan þe parich is togydur mette.
Þou schalte pronownce þis hydowse þinge
Wit cros, and candul, and belle-knyllynge,[14]

1 trappings
2 goods, possessions
3 like
4 knowest
5 been
6 shrive, confess
7 past a churchyard
8 fastened up (so as to prevent the entrance of cattle)
9 gate between pasture-land and ploughed land
10 destroyed
11 path
12 ears
13 hindrance
14 tolling

Þe furste Sononday affter Myȝhellfeste[1];
Myd-Lenton[2] Sonday schal be neste[3];
Þe Trenite feste is þe þridde, os[4] I þe say;
Þe ferthe is þe Sononday aftur Candulmes day.
Spelle[5] hit reddely,[6] for noȝte þou wonde,[7]
Þat[8] alle men þe undurstonde.

FORM OF EXCOMMUNICATION (I)

By auttorite of God almiȝti, Fader[9] and Son and Holy Gost, and of al þe seyntes of heven. First,[10] we accursen al them that broken[11] the pece of Holy Chirch or sturben hit; . . . all þat falsen or use false measures, busshelles, galones, and potelles,[12] quartes, [cuppes], or false wightes, poundes or poundrelles,[13] or false ellenyerdes,[14] wetyngly oþer þan þe lawe of þe lond woll; . . . also all þat distroubleth þe pes of Englond, and traitors that ben false or isenting[15] to falsenes, agen þe king or the reame[16]; . . . also all that helpen with strength, or with vitayles, or soccouren Jewes or Sarzons[17] agen Cristendom; also all þat sleen childeren, or distroyen boren or unborn, with drynkes or with wichcraft, and all her consentes[18]; also all þat stondeth or herkeneth by nyȝtes under wolles, dores, or wyndowes, for to spy touching evil, and all house-brekeres and man-quellers.[19]. . .

FORM OF EXCOMMUNICATION (II)

By þe auctorite of oure Fadur, of þe Sone, of þe Holy Goste, and off ou[r]e lady Seynte Mary, Goddus modur of heven, and alle oþur virgynes, and Seynte Myhel,[20] and alle oþur angellus and archangellus, and Petur and Poule, and oþur apostolus, and Seynte Stewne,[21] and alle oþur martyres, and Seynte Nicholas, and alle oþur confessoures,[22] and alle

1 Michaelmas
2 Mid-Lenten
3 next
4 as
5 speak, say; MS. sepelle
6 promptly, willingly
7 shrink, fear
8 so that
9 MS. ffader
10 MS. ffirst
11 break
12 a measure for liquids, equal to half a gallon
13 scales, balances
14 ell-measures
15 consenting
16 realm
17 Saracens
18 accomplices
19 murderers
20 Michael
21 Stephen
22 those who suffered persecution, but not martyrdom, for the sake of their religion

þe holy halowes[1] of hewen, we acurson and waryon[2] and departon[3] from alle gode dedus and prayeres of Holy Chyrche, and dampnon[4] into þe peyne of helle, alle þoo[5] þat have done þeis articoles þat we have sayde before, tyl[6] þei comen to amendemente. We acurson hem be þe auctorite off þe courete off Rome, witinne- and witouteforȝþe,[7] sclepynge and wakynge, goynge, syttynge and standinge, lyggynge, ofbowne[8] þe erthe and undur þe erthe, . . . in wode, in watur, in felde, and in towne. We acurson be þe Fadur and Sone and Holy Goste. Acursyn hem angelus and archangellus, and alle þe nyne ordorus of heven. Acursyn hem patriarchus, prophetus, and apostolus, and alle Goddus disciplus, and alle holy innocentus, martyres, confessoures, and virgynes, monkus, cannonus, eremytus,[9] and prestus and clerkus, þat þei have no parte off masses ne mateynus[10] ne evensonge, ne of none oþur gode prayeres þat bene done in Holy Chyrche, no in none oþur holy place; bot þe peynus of helle for to be here mede,[11] wit Judas þat betrayed oure Lord Jesu Cryste, and þe lyf of hem be putte oute of þe bokus of lyfe, tyl þay comen to amendemente, and satisfaccion made. Fiat, fiat! Amen!

Þan þou þi candul kaste to growende,
Ande spytte[12] þerto þe same stownde,[13]
And lette also þe belle knylle,
To make hertus þe more grylle.[14]

THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

'Perhaps it is hardly too much to say that no literary production since the time of the apostles has contributed so much to Western civilization as the Benedictine Rule; and yet its author probably never regarded it as a literary production at all' (Cook and Tinker, *Sel. Trans. from Old Eng. Prose*, p. 278).

Benedict was born at the end of the fifth century; by the end of the sixth his Rule was chosen by Pope Gregory the Great for a monastery Gregory had founded at Rome. By the end of the eighth century — the age of Charlemagne

1 saints
2 execrate
3 separate, shut off
4 condemn
5 those
6 MS. tul
7 at home and abroad
8 above
9 hermits, recluses
10 matins
11 reward
12 spit
13 at the same time
14 (to) shudder, tremble

the Rule was almost universally followed in European monasteries. Throughout the Middle Ages the Benedictine monks were famous for their learning, and, by their zeal in copying classical manuscripts, preserved most of those that have come down to us. For a general account of them, see Montalembert's *Monks of the West*, Book 4.

The early English manuscripts of the Rule are many of them based on a version written for nuns. That from which our selections are taken is MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Vespasian A. 25, in the Northern dialect of the earlier fifteenth century, as printed by Kock (E.E.T.S. 120), the respective pages being 95–6, 99–100, 102–5, 115–6.

THE HOURS FOR MEALS

Of time of mete now es to lere,
In times and sesons of þe ȝere.
Fro Pas[1] right unto Witsunnday,
At þe sext our[2] ete sal þai,
Þe whilk es midday for to mene,
And sine[3] sal þai soupe[4] bedene.[5]
In somer, fro[6] Witsunday be past,
Wedinsday and Friday sal þai fast,
Bot-if[7] þai oþer[8] swink[9] or swete
In hay or corn with travel grete.
And if þai non slike[10] travel done,[11]
On þos days sal þai fast to none.[12]
And on oþer days, als I air[13] saide,
At mydday sal þer mete be graide.[14]
Bot al þis sal be purued[15] playn,
At þe ordinance of þer soverayn[16];
What seson so[17] scho[18] putes þam t
Withoutin groching[19] sal þai do.
Fro time þat December begin
Until clene Lentyn cum in,

1 Easter
2 sixth hour
3 afterwards
4 sup
5 together
6 from the time that
7 unless
8 either
9 labor
10 such
11 do, engage in
12 noon
13 before
14 ready, prepared
15 provide
16 prioress, superior
17 whatsoever manner of life according to the season
18 she
19 grumbling

At hi[1] none sal þai ete;
Þer lesons[2] sal þai not forgete.
In Lentyn sal non to mete gang
Efter[3] þe our of evynsang;
And al servys[4] þan sal þai sai
Efter mete, bi light of day,
So þat al be rewlid right
At wend[5] to bede bi dais lyght.

DAILY OCCUPATIONS

All þat wons in religioun[6]
Aw[7] to have sum ocupacioun,
Ouþer[8] in kirk of[9] hali bedes[10]
Or stodying in oder stedes.[11]
For ydilnes, os sais Sant Paul,
Es grete enmy unto þe saul;
And þerfor es ordand[12] þat þai
Sum gude warkes sal wirk alway,
And sum certane times of þe ȝer
To wirk with hand, os men may her.
Fro Pase, thurgh al Cristyndome,
Til þe kalandes[13] of October cum,
Unto prime[14] sone sal þai rise,
And sine ilkon[15] wirk on þer wise
What so es most nedeful labore,
Until þe tyme of þe third oure.
And lessons sal þai rede þan next
Fro þe third our unto þe sext.
And efterward thurgh wirchep
Fro oures[16] and mes[17] wend unto mete.

1 high
2 readings
3 MS. or efter
4 the whole service
5 to go
6 dwell in religion, lead a religious life
7 ought
8 either
9 with
10 prayers
11 other places
12 ordained
13 first
14 church-service celebrated about 5 or 6 A.M.
15 each one
16 hours of service
17 mass

And efter mete, þen sal þai slepe.
And silence al samen[1] sal þai kepe,
So þat none do oþer disese,[2]
Bot ilkon paid[3] oþer to plese.
Sone efterward, when þis es done,
And þai haf said þe our of none,
Until þeir werk þen sal þai gang,
Unto þe tyme of evynsang,
To scher[4] or bind, if it be nede,
Or dike,[5] or els do oþer dede,
For unto travel wor we born,
And al our elders us beforn.
Bot travel aw mesurd to be
Til ilkon efter þer degre,
To men or women, old or ȝing,
Ilkon to do divers þing.
Fro October, os I are[6] sayd,
Unto Lentyn es þus purvayd[7]:
In orisons, and in þer oures
And lessons, sal be þer laboures.

LENTEN OBSERVANCE

In Lentyn tyme þen sal þai rise
Arly, and say þer servyse
And orisons til Godes honoure,
Until it be past þe third oure.
Þan to þe tent our[8] sal þai wirk,
And sine til non[9] serve in þe kirk.
And in Lentyn aw þam to luke[10]
Þat ilkon have ordand a buke,
Whilk sal be red right to þe end,
Als þe cours of þe rewl hase kend.[11]

1 together
2 discomfort, disturbance
3 content
4 cut, reap
5 make ditches
6 before
7 provided for
8 tenth hour
9 no
10 see
11 tau

And who so groches oght here ogayn[1]
Sal be punest with grevus payne.
Who tentes to trofils,[2] and wil not rede,
And þai overtayn[3] with þat dede,
With payn þai sal amendes make,
So þat oþer ensaumpil take.

THE ENTERTAINMENT OF GUESTS

A priores aw to be prest[4]
For to resave ilka gude gest,
And at hir myght þam mere[5] make
Soveraynly for Godes sake,
Namely[6] þam þat er[7] pilgrams knawn,
And pouer[8] þat hase[9] not of þer awn.
For God until [us] þus sal say
In dome,[10] apon þe dredful day:
Hospes eram, et colligistis me—
'I wos a gest in my degre,
And in ȝour hous ȝe herberd me.'
Þan aw us[11] gestes and gud pilgrims
For to releve in al þere lims,
And for to refresch in al right,
Als it es det[12] be day and nyght,
And oblis[13] þam kissink[14] of pese,
Perfite luf for to encres.
And when þai cum, bi day or nyght,
And also when þai wend to flight,
Loute[15] unto þam aw[16] grete and small,
Or els unto þer fete at[17] fall,
Witand[18] wele in þat sesoune
Þai honour Crist in þer persoune;

1 against this
2 attends to trifles
3 if they are found out
4 ready, eager
5 merry
6 especially
7 are
8 poor people
9 have
10 judgment
11 it befits us, we ought
12 due
13 courteously give
14 kiss
15 to bow
16 ought
17 to
18 knowing

For who so resaves þe pure man
In Crist name, resaves Crist þan.
A soveraryn[1] sal ger gestes kepe[2]
With honour and with gret wirchepe,
Or rede to þam, or ger be rede,
How hali men þer lives lede. . . .
Scho sal gif water unto þer hend,
And wesch þeir fete, als Crist hase kend.[3]
When þai so do, þai sal reherce,
Word bi word, and say þis verce:
Suscepimus, Deus, misericordiam tuam in medio
'We have resavyd, Lord, þi mercy,
In þe mydes of þe hows haly.' . . .
Þe gestes kechin[4] sal be set
Allone, þat it no noþer[5] let,
So þat þai be servyd at ese,
And ilk man redy þam to plese.
And luk þer bedes[6] ordand bene
With litter larch[7] and clothes clene,
And swilk servandes assigned þam til
Þat wil þam serve with gude wil.
None aw þam do for to greve,
Ne speke with þam withoutyn leve,
Bot loutand[8] hals[9] þam wher þai go,
And with blissing pase furth þam fro.

THE NUN'S CLOTHING

Thay sal be clede ful wele, we wate,
Efter þer place es cald or hate.
For in cald stedes[10] who so er sted,[11]
Þam nedes for to be better cled;
And[12] who er in hate cuntre,

[1] prioress
[2] cause guests to be entertained
[3] taught
[4] kitchen
[5] other
[6] beds
[7] large straw-bed
[8] bowing
[9] salute
[10] places
[11] situated
[12] MS. in

Sich clething to þam may be;
And al it sal be purvayd playne
At þe ordinance of þeir soverayne.
In comun places for alkins note[1]
Sufficis a kirtil[2] and a cote[3];
And mantels sal þai have certayne,
In winter dubil, in somer playne;
And changing kirtils sal þai have
In nyghtes þer oþer for to save.
Schos þai sall have, whor þai dwel,
Swilk os þai may find for to sel.[4]
Of þe farest[5] þai sal not by,
Bot þe vilist ful bowsumly.[6]
And þeir soverayn aw for to se
Þat þair gere[7] evynly o[r]dand[8] be,
Mete for þam þat sal it fang,[9]
And noþer to schort ne to lang.
When þai tak new, þe old sal þen
Be partid til[10] pouer women.
And when þai sal went[11] in cuntre,
Þair clething sal mor honest[12] be;
And home agayn when þai cum eft,
Þen sal þai were slik os[13] þai left.
Until þeir beddyng sal þai have
At[14] suffise þam fro cauld to save.
And oftsithes sall þer bed be sene,
Þat no tresure be þam betwene,
Ne no gude þat to þam may gayne[15];
Who so it hase, sall soffer payne.
For whi[16] þer soverayn sal þam bede[17]
All unto þam þat es nede.

1 all kinds of work
2 gown
3 skirt, petticoat
4 for sale
5 fairest
6 meekly
7 apparel
8 fitly ordered; em. K.
9 receive
10 distributed to
11 go
12 finer
13 such as
14 (enough) to
15 be useful
16 wherefore
17 offer, give them

THE PORTER

Ane old man sal þe ʒates ʒeme
Þat witti es, and wele wil seme[2]
For to welcum with wordes fre
Evyrilk man in þer degre.
His dwelling sal be dyght[3] algayte[4]
In a cel beside þe ʒate,
So þat he be redy ay
Til al[5] þat cums be nyght or day.
And when so ony knok or call,
Softli answer þam he sall;
To her þer wordes sal he be bayn,[6]
And bryng þam grath[7] answer ogayn.
And baynly sal he bryng and take
Al þat men sendes for Godes sake.
And ever him aw to ʒeme þe ʒate
For al aventurs,[8] arely and layte.
In abbais aw to be al thing
Þat nedeful es to þeir lifing,
Als watter for to do al þer dedis,
Miln,[9] kiln,[10] and oven, and al þat nedis,
So þat þai sal not outward gang
To say, for dred, or wirk, oght wrang.

ROBERT MANNYNG OF BRUNNE, HANDLING SIN

Robert Mannyng of Brunne (now Bourne), in Lincolnshire, wrote his po the *Handlyng Synne*, in 1303, when he had for fifteen years belonged to priory of Gilbertine canons at Sempringham (six miles from Bourne). T work is a poetical adaptation of the *Manuel des Pechiez* of William of Wadi ton, who wrote some time in the reign of Edward I (1272–1307). While ch acterizing the seven deadly sins, etc., it pictures in a lively way the life a vices of the age, and inserts tales here and there to point a moral. The poe

1 keep
2 be suitable
3 prepared
4 always
5 for all
6 ready
7 direct
8 with reference to all contingencies
9 mill
10 baker

has been spoken of as 'the work which more than any former one foreshadowed the path that English literature was to tread from that time forward' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.v. Mannyng); and, in general, it has been more popular than the writer's other chief work, a chronicle-history of England. Of Mannyng's language Ten Brink says (*Early English Literature* 1. 302): 'Robert of Brunne is without doubt one of the writers who served most to spread the East-Midland dialect toward the south. And through him many new Romanic words were probably either introduced into the English literary language, or at least established there.'

With the caution in 303 10 ff. may be compared the following (reprint of E.E.T.S. 15. 59):

A man that intendyth to mynstrels shall soone be weddyd to poverte....
Iff mynstrels pleace the, feyne as thow herde them, but thynke uppone another.
He that lawith [laughs] at a mynstrels worde gevith to hym a wedde [forfeit, pledge].

Our selections are from E.E.T.S. 119 and 123, which print the version of this poem (12,630 lines long) in MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 1701; and, in parallel columns, the corresponding parts of Wadington's Old French. The selections are, respectively, lines 985–1054, 4571–4614, 4739–4774, 8987–9006, 10,729–10,798.

THE PROPER WAY OF KEEPING HOLY DAYS

Ȝyf þou make karol[1] or play,
Þou halewyst nat þyn halyday.
Ȝyf þou come overgladly þartyl,[2]
And ȝyvest þarto mochyl[3] þy wyl,
Yn þat hast þou mochyl plyȝt,[4]
For synne wyl come þurgh swyche syȝt.
Ȝyf þou ever settyst swerde eyþer ryng
For to gadyr a wrastlyng,
Þe halyday þou holdest noght,
Whan swyche bobaunce[5] for þe ys wroȝt:
Cuntek[6] þere comyþ, or ouþer bobaunce,
And sum man slayn, or lost þurȝe chaunce.
Ȝyf þou ever yn felde, eyþer[7] in toune,
Dedyst[8] floure-gerland or coroune[9]
To make wommen to gadyr þere,

1 dancing in a ring, accompanied by singing
2 thereto, to it
3 greatly
4 danger
5 pomp
6 quarreling, discord
7 or
8 madest
9 coronal, wreath

To se whych þat feyrer were.
Þys ys aȝens þe commaundement,
And þe halyday for þe ys shent[1];
Hyt ys a gaderyng for lecherye,
And ful grete pryde, and herte hye.[2]
Ȝyf þou ever janglyst[3] at messe,
Yn þe cherche with more or lesse,
And lettyst[4] men of[5] here preyers,
For hem perel soþely þou berys;
Þe halyday þou holdest nat ryȝt,
And lettyst to wurschyp God almyȝt.
Halyday was made for preyere,
To God oure herende[6] for to bere.
Certys we ouȝt þan with ful mynde
To preye God us of synne unbynde,[7]
And yn gode lyfe us wysse and rede,[8]
And forȝeve us al oure mysdede.
Ȝyf þou hauntyst[9] to make þy play
At þe taverne on þe halyday,
To many on[10] comyþ þarfore evyl
Þurgh cumberaunce[11] of þe devyl.
Holy Chyrche wyl þe werne[12]
Þe halyday to go to þe taverne,
And namly byfore þe noun,[13]
Whan Goddys servyse owyþ to be doun.
Taverne ys þe devylys knyfe;
Hyt sleþ[14] þe, oþer soule or lyfe;
One of þys shal hyt do,
Ȝyf þou haunte[15] comunly þarto.
Hyt shortyþ þy lyfe, over moche drynkynge,
And sleþ þy soule with bakbytyngge;
Hyt wastyþ þy body, and makeþ þe drye,

[1] spoiled, ruined
[2] high heart
[3] dost engage in altercation
[4] dost hinder
[5] from
[6] petition
[7] set us free from sin
[8] direct and counsel
[9] art accustomed
[10] many a one
[11] harassing, temptation
[12] forbid
[13] noon
[14] slayeth
[15] resort

And gadryþ[1] lecherye to glotonye;
And þe comaundment ys brokun,
And þe halyday, byfore of spokun.
  Ȝyf þou do any man o dawe[2]
On þe halyday for any lawe,
Swyche men grevusly werche
Aȝens þe state of Holy Chyrche;
For holy preyere, and for þe pees,
Þe halyday God hyt chees.
  Ȝyf þou ever with jogeloure,[3]
With hasa[r]doure,[4] or with rotoure,[5]
Hauntyst taverne, or were to any pere[6]
To pley at þe ches or at þe tablere,[7]
Specyaly before þe noun,
Whan Goddys servyse owyþ to be doun,
Hyt ys aȝens þe comaundment
And Holy Cherches asent.[8]
Ȝyf þou be *infra sacros*,[9]
And art a clerk, and hast þe los[10]
Of subdekene, or dekene by name,
So moche art þou þe more to blame.
Þys[11] lerned men ȝyven ensample so
Þat þe lewd[12] men þe more mysdo.[13]

THE EVIL OF TOURNAMENTS

  Of tournamentys þat are forbede
Yn Holy Cherche, as men rede,
Of tournamentys Y preve[14] þerynne,
Sevene poyntes of dedly synne:
Fyrst ys pryde, as þou wel wost,[15]
Avauntement,[16] bobaunce, and bost;

1 adds; MS. gadryd
2 kill any man
3 juggler (one who entertained with songs, stories, or tricks)
4 player at dice
5 player on the rote
6 a companion to any one
7 backgammon
8 sanction
9 of the lower clergy
10 praise, honor
11 these
12 ignorant
13 do evil
14 prove
15 knowest
16 self-glorification

Of ryche atyre ys here avaunce,[1]
Prykyng[2] here hors with olypraunce.[3]
Wete þou wel þer ys envye
Whan one seeþ anoþer do maystrye[4];
Oþer yn wurdys oþer yn dedys,
Envye moste of alle hem ledys.
Yre[5] and wraþþe may þey nat late[6];
Ofte are tournamentys made for hate.
Ȝyf every *knyȝt lovede oþer weyl*,
Tournamentes shulde be never a deyl[7];
And certys þey falle yn sloghnes,[8]
Þey love hyt more þan God oþer messe;
And, þerof ys hyt no doute,
Þey dyspende more gode þer aboute[9] —
Þat ys ȝeve alle to folye —
Þan to any dede of mercy.
And ȝyt may nat, on no wyse,
Be forgete[10] Dame Coveytyse,
For she shal fonde,[11] on alle wyse,[12]
To wynne hors and harnyse.
And ȝyt shal he make sum robbery,
Or bygyle hys hoste þer[13] he shal lye.[14]
Glotonye also ys hem among,
Delycyus metes[15] to make hem strong,
And drynke þe wyne þat he were lyght,
Wyþ glotonye to make hym wyght.[16]
Ȝyt ys þere Dame Lecherye;
Of here[17] cumþ alle here[18] maystrye.
Many tymes, for wymmen sake,
Knyghteys tournamentys make;
And whan he wendyþ to þe tournament

[1] boast, vaunt
[2] urging on
[3] vanity, ostentation
[4] wonderful deeds
[5] anger
[6] forsake, desist from
[7] bit
[8] sloth
[9] in this pursuit
[10] forgotten
[11] try
[12] by every means
[13] where
[14] spend the night
[15] viands
[16] courageous
[17] her
[18] their

She sendyþ hym sum pryvy[1] present,
And byt[2] hym do for hys lemman
Yn vasshelage[3] alle þat he kan;
So ys he bete[4] þere, for here love,
Þat he ne may sytte hys hors above,
Þat peraventure, yn alle hys lyve,
Shal he never aftyr þryve.

BISHOP GROSSETESTE OF LINCOLN

Y shall ȝow telle, as Y have herd,
Of þe bysshope Seynt Roberd[5];
Hys toname[6] ys Grostest
Of Lynkolne, so seyþ þe gest.[7]
He loved moche to here þe harpe,
For mannys wytte hyt makyþ sharpe.
Next hys chaumbre, besyde hys stody,
Hys harpers chaumbre was fast þerby;
Many tymes, be nyȝtys and dayys,
He had solace of notes[8] and layys.
One asked hym onys[9] resun why
He had delyte yn mynstralsy;
He answerede hym on þys manere,
Why he helde þe harper so dere:
'Þe vertu of þe harpe, þurgh skylle and ryȝt,
Wyl destroye þe fendes myȝt,
And to þe croys by gode skylle
Ys þe harpe lykened weyle.
Anoþer poynt cumforteþ me:
Þat God haþ sent unto a tre
So moche joye to here with eere;
Moche þan more joye ys þere
With God hymselfe, þere he wonys.[10]

1 secret
2 bids
3 prowess
4 beaten, smitten
5 Robert
6 surname, nickname
7 romance, tale
8 melodies, songs
9 once
10 where he dwells

þe harpe þerof me ofte mones[1]
Of þe joye and of þe blys
Where God hymself wonys and ys.
þarefor, gode men, ȝe shul lere,[2]
Whan ȝe any glemen here,
To wurschep God at[3] ȝoure powere,
As Davyd seyþ yn þe Sautere[4]:
"Yn harpe, yn thabour, and symphan gle,[5]
Wurschepe God; yn troumpes,[6] and sautre
Yn cordys,[8] an organes, and bellys ryngyng
Yn al þese, wurschepe ȝe hevene Kyng.[9]"

QUIET IN CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD DURING THE TIME OF SERVICE

Karolles, wrastlynges, or somour-games,[10]
Whoso ever haunteþ any swyche[11] shames[12]
Yn cherche oþer yn chercheȝerd,
Of sacrylage he may be aferd;
Or entyrludes, or syngynge,
Or tabure bete,[13] or oþer pypynge,
Alle swyche þyng forbodyn es
Whyle þe prest stondeþ at messe.
Alle swyche to every gode preste ys lothe,
And sunner wyl he make hym wroth
þan he wyl þat haþ no wyt,
Ne undyrstondeþ nat Holy Wryt;
And specyaly, at hyghe tymes,
Karolles to synge, and rede rymys,
Noght yn none holy stedes,[14]
þat myȝt dysturble þe prestes bedes,[15]

1 reminds
2 learn
3 according to
4 psalter
5 music of the symphony (instrument like the tabor)
6 trumpets
7 psaltery
8 chords (strings of a musical instrument)
9 Ps. 150. 3–5
10 summer-games
11 such
12 disgraceful doings
13 beating
14 places
15 devotions

Or ȝyf he were yn orysun,[1]
Or any ouþer devocyun,
Sacrylage ys alle hyt tolde.[2]

THE TALE OF THE MINER

Þyr was a man beȝunde þe see
A mynour, woned[3] yn a cyte.
(Mynurs, þey make yn hyllys holes,
As yn þe West Cuntre men seke coles.)
Þys mynur soȝte stones undyr þe molde,[4]
Þat men make of[5] sylver and golde;
He wroȝt on a day, and holed[6] yn þe hyl;
A perylous chaunce to hym fyl,[7]
For a grete party[8] of þat yche[9] myne
Fyl dowun yn þe hole, and closed hym ynne.
Hys felaus alle, þat were hym hende,[10]
Þat he were dede weyl soþely wende;
Þey ȝede[11] and toke hem alle to rede,[12]
And tolde hys wyfe þat he was dede.
Þys womman pleyned[13] here husbonde sore —
Wulde God þat many swyche wommen wore! —
She hylpe hys soule yn alle þyng,
In almesdede, and yn offryng;
She offred for hym to þe auter,
Ful of wyne, a pecher,[14]
And a feyre lofe withalle,
Every day as for a pryncypalle,[15]
Alle þat twelvemoneþ stabely,[16]
But o[17] day þat passed forby.
Fewe swyche wymmen now we fynde,

1 prayer, supplication
2 counted, considered
3 who dwelt
4 earth
5 from which are made
6 dug
7 befel
8 part
9 same
10 kindly disposed
11 went
12 took counsel all together
13 lamented, bewailed
14 pitcher
15 ?
16 regularly
17 one

Þat to here husbondes are so kynde.
But þys wyfe, at[1] alle here myȝt,
Ded for hym boþe day and nyȝt.
Fyl hyt at þe twelvemoneþ ende,
Hys felaws to þe mounteyne gun wende,
And come to þe same stede efte
Þere þey last here werk ilefte,
Ryȝt þere þey fyrst bygan,
And perced þurgh unto þys man.
Þe man yn gode state þey fonde,
Lyvyng withoute wem[2] or wounde.
Everych one þey hadde grete ferly,[3]
And þat was grete resun why
Alle þo men were yn grete were[4]
How he had lyved alle þat ȝere.
But he tolde hem everych one
How he hadde lyved þere alone:
'Y have lyved gracyous lyfe
Þurgh þe curtesye of my wyfe,
For every day she haþ me sent
Brede and wyne to[5] present;
But o day certys ete Y noȝt,
For no mete[6] was to me broȝt.'
Þey led þys man unto þe tounne,
And tolde þys myracle up and dounne,
Fyrst þurogh þe cyte,
And seþþe[7] þurogh þe cuntre.
Þey asked hym, at þe laste,
Þat day þat he dyde faste;
He tolde hem þe dayes name,
And hys wyfe seyd þe same;
Þat day she offred never a deyl[8] —
Þe Gode Fryday he myȝt be weyl.

[1] with
[2] harm, injury
[3] wonder, astonishment
[4] doubt, uncertainty
[5] as a
[6] food

Now mow[1] ȝe here þat almesdede
Gostely[2] a man wyl fede,
And so mow ȝe weyl undyrstande
Þat God ys payd of[3] gode offrande.
But for alle þys tale, yn ȝoure lyves,
Truste ȝe nat moche on ȝoure wyves,
Ne on ȝoure chyldryn, for no þyng,
But makeþ ȝeself[4] ȝoure offryng,
For so kynde a womman as Y of tolde
Lyveþ nat now, be þou bolde[5];
Ne no clerk, þat þys ryme redys,
Shal fynde a womman of so kynde dedes.

THE BOOK OF THE KNIGHT OF LA TOUR-LANDRY

Among the numerous instruction-books of the Middle Ages was one known as *Le Livre du Chevalier de la Tour-Landry pour l'Enseignement de ses Filles*, a series of tales written (collected, rather) in 1371–1372 for his motherless daughters by Geoffroy de la Tour-Landry, a nobleman of Anjou. A similar book written for his sons has disappeared entirely, but this for the daughters was frequently copied — about a dozen manuscript copies being still in existence. A German translation of the work was printed toward the end of the fifteenth century, and an English translation by Caxton in 1484.

Our selections are taken from the Early English Text Society's print (No. 33, ed. Wright, 1868; revised ed., 1906) of MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 1764, assigned to the reign of Henry VI (1422–1461). This translation, by an unknown hand, is much less literal than Caxton's (cf. Wright's introduction). The selections are from pages 1–4, 22, 26–8, and 39–40 of the edition of 1906. The words in brackets are supplied from Caxton's edition.

PROLOGUE

In the yere of the incarnacion of oure Lord MCCCLXXI, as Y was in a gardin, al hevi and full of thought, in the shadow, about the ende of the monthe of Aprill, but a litell Y rejoysed me of the melodie and song of the wilde briddes. Thei sang there in her[6] langages, as the thrustill, the thrusshe, the nytinggale, and other briddes, the whiche

[1] may
[2] spiritually
[3] pleased with
[4] yourself
[5] assured
[6] their

were full of mirthe and joye; and thaire suete songe made my herte to lighten, and made me to thinke of the tyme that is passed of my youthe, how love in gret distresse had holde me, and how Y was in her service mani tymez full of sorugh and gladnesse, as mani lovers ben. But my sorw was heled, and my service wel ysette[1] and quitte, for he gave [me a fayr] wyff, and . . .[2] that was bothe faire and good, [whiche had knowleche of alle honoure, alle good, and fayre mayntenynge,[3]] and of all good she was bell[4] and the floure; and Y delited me so moche in her that Y made for her love-songges, balades, rondelles, viralles,[5] and diverse nwe thinges in the best wise that Y couthe. . . . And as Y was in the saide gardein, thinkynge of these thoughtz, Y sawe come towardes me my iii doughters, of the whiche I was joyfull, and had grete desire that thei shuld turne to good and worshipe above all ertheli thinges, for thei were yonge, and had but tendir witte; and so atte the begynnyng a man aught to lerne[6] his doughters with good ensaumples yevinge, as dede the Quene Proues of Hongrie, that faire and goodly chastised[7] and taught her doughters, as it [is] contened in her boke. . . . And Y said to hem that Y wolde make a boke of ensaumples, for to teche my doughtres, that thei might understond how thei shulde governe hem, and knowe good from evell. And so Y made hem extraie[8] me ensaumples of the Bible and other bokes that Y had, as the gestis[9] of kingges, the croniclez of Fraunce, Grece, of Inglond, and of mani other straunge londes. And Y made hem rede me everi boke; and ther that Y fonde a good ensaumple, Y made extraie it oute. And thanne Y made this boke. But Y wolde not sette it in ryme, but in prose, for to abregge[10] it, and that it might be beter and more pleinly to be understond. And Y made this boke for the gret love that Y had to my said doughtres, the whiche Y loved as fader aught to love his child, having hertely joye to finde wayes to stere and turne hem to goodnesse and worshippe, and to love and serve her[11] Creatoure, and to have love of her neighboures and of the world. And therfor all faders and moders, after good nature,[12] aught to teche her children to leve all wrong and

1 bestowed
2 MS. illegible
3 deportment
4 bore the bell
5 virelays
6 teach
7 corrected
8 extract
9 tales
10 abridge, shorten
11 their
12 in the kindness of their hearts

evell waies, and shew hem the true right weye, as wele for the salvacion of the soule as for the worshipe of the worldely bodi. And therfor Y have made ii bokes, one for my sones, another for my doughtres, for to lerne hem to rede. And in reding, it may not be but that thei shall kepe with hem som good ensaumple for to flee evell, and withholde the good. For it shall not be posible but sumtyme thei shall have mynde on sum good ensaumple, sum good doctrine of this boke, whanne thei knowe or here speke hereafter, as thei fall in the rewe[1] upon sum spekers of suche matiers.

THE STORY OF THE MAGPIE

Ther was a woman that had a pie[2] in a cage, that spake and wolde tell talys that she saw do. And so it happed that her husbonde made kepe[3] a gret ele in a litell ponde in his gardin, to that entent to yeve it sum of his frendes that wolde come to see hym; but the wyff, whanne her husbond was oute, saide to her maide: 'Late us ete the gret ele, and Y will saie to my husbond that the otour[4] hathe eten hym;' and so it was done. And whan the good man was come, the pye began to tell hym how her maistresse had eten the ele. And he yode[5] to the ponde, and fonde not the ele. And he asked his wiff wher the ele was become.[6] And she wende to have excused her, but he saide her: 'Excuse you not, for Y wote well ye have eten yt, for the pye hathe told me.' And so ther was gret noyse[7] betwene the man and hys wiff for etinge of the ele. But whanne the good man was gone, the maistresse and the maide come to the pie, and plucked of all the fedres on the pyes hede, saieng: 'Thou hast discovered[8] us of the ele'; and thus was the pore pye plucked. But ever after, whanne the pie sawe a balled or a pilled[9] man, or a woman with an high forhede, the pie saide to hem: 'Ye spake of the ele.' And therfor here is an ensaumple that no woman shulde ete no lycorous[10] morcelles in the absens and withoute weting[11] of her husbond, but yef it so were that it be with folk of worshippe, to make hem chere[12]; for this woman was afterward mocked for the pye and the ele.

1 successively
2 magpie
3 caused to be kept
4 otter
5 went
6 what had become of the eel
7 disturbance
8 betrayed
9 with hair removed
10 dainty
11 knowledge
12 entertainment

THE STORY OF THE OBEDIENT WIFE

Hit happed onis there were iii marchauntes that yede[1] homwarde from a faiere, and as thei fell in talkinge, ridyng on the waye, one of hem saide: 'It is a noble thinge a man to have a good wiff that obeiethe and dothe his biddinge atte all tymes.' 'Be my trouthe,' saide that other, 'my wiff obeiethe me truly.' 'Be God,' saide that other, 'Y trowe myn obeieth best to her husbonde.' Thanne he that beganne furst to speke saide: 'Lete[2] leye a wager of a dener,[3] and whos wiff that obeiethe worst, lete her husbonde paie for the dener'; and thus the wager was leyde. And thei ordeined amonges hem how thei shulde saie[4] her wyfes, for thei ordeined that everi man shulde bidde his wyff lepe into a basin that thei shulde sette afore her, and they were suoren that none shulde late his wiff have weting[5] of her wager, save only thei shulde saye: 'Lokithe,[6] wiff, that Y comaunde be done.' However it be, after one of hem bade his wiff lepe into the basin that he had sette afore her on the grounde, and she ansuered and axed wherto,[7] and he saide: 'For it is myn luste,[8] and Y will ye do it.' 'Be God,' quod she, 'Y will furst wete[9] wherto ye will have me lepe into the basin.' And for nothinge her husbond coude do she wolde not do it. So her husbonde up with his fust,[10] and gave her ii or iii gret strokes; and thanne yede thei to the secounde marchauntys hous, and he comaunded that whatever he bade do it shulde be do, but it was not longe after but he bade his wiff lepe into the basin that was afore her on the flore, and she asked wherto, and she saide she wolde not for hym. And thanne he toke a staffe, and al tobete[11] her. And thanne thei yode to the thridde marchauntes hous, and there thei fonde the mete on the borde, and he rowned[12] in one of his felawes heres, and saide: 'After dyner Y will assaie my wiff, and bidde her lepe into the basin.' And so thei sette hem to her[13] dyner. And whan thei were sette, the good man saide to his wiff: 'Whatever Y bidde, loke it be done, however it be.' And she that loved hym, and dredde

[1] went
[2] let us
[3] dinner
[4] assay, try
[5] knowledge
[6] see to it
[7] for what purpose
[8] desire
[9] know
[10] fist
[11] beat severely
[12] whispered
[13] their

hym, herde what he saide, and toke hede to that worde, but she wost[1] not what he ment. But it happed that thei had atte her dyner rere[2] eggis, and there lacked salt on the borde, and the good man saide: 'Wiff, sele sus table,' and the wiff understode that her husbonde had saide: 'Seyle sus table,' the whiche is in Frenshe: 'Lepe on the borde.' And she, that was aferde to disobeie, lepte upon the borde, and threw down mete and drinke, and brake the verres,[3] and spilt all that there was on the borde. 'What,' saide the good man, 'thanne canne[4] ye none other plaie, wiff?' 'Be ye wode,[5] sir,' she saide, 'Y have do youre biddinge, as ye bade me to my power, notwithstondinge it is youre harme and myn; but Y had lever ye had harme and Y bothe, thanne Y disobeied youre biddinge; for ye saide: "Seyle sus table."' 'Nay,' quod he, 'Y saide: "Sele sus table," that is to saie, "Salt on the borde."' 'Bi my trouthe,' she saide, 'Y understode that ye bade me lepe on the borde,' and there was moche mirthe and laughinge. And the other two marchauntes saide it was no nede to bidde her lepe into the basin, for she obeied ynough; wherthorugh[6] thei consented that her husbond had wonne the wager, and thei had lost bothe. And after[7] she was gretly preised for her obeisaunce to her husbonde, and she was not bete as were that other ii wyves that wolde not do her husbondes comaundement.

HOW ST. BERNARD'S SISTER WAS LED AWAY FROM VANITIES

Hit befell that Seint Bernarde, that was an holy man and of gret richesse and birth, lefte all his possessiones and good, and yede to serve God in an abbey; and for his holy lyving, and weringe[8] of the heyre, and doinge gret abstinence and almesdedes, made[9] that he was chose to be abbot of that place. And he hadd a gret ladi to his suster, that come to see hym withe gret meyni,[10] well arraied with riche clothinge, and riche atyred of perles and presious stones. And in this array she come afore her brother, Seint Bernard. And whanne

[1] knew
[2] underdone
[3] glasses
[4] know
[5] mad
[6] wherefore
[7] afterwards
[8] MS. of weringe
[9] brought it about
[10] retinue

he sawe her in that array, he turned to her his backe and blessed[1] hym, and the lady was ashamed, and asked whi he ne wolde with her speke. And he saide that he had gret pitee to see her so disgised, and in that pride that she was inne. And she dede of[2] her riche atyre and gay clothes, and toke other symple arraye. And he saide: 'Suster, yef Y love youre bodi, by reson Y shuld beter love youre sowle. Wene ye not that ye displese God and his aungells to see in you suche pompe and pride, to aorne[3] suche a carion as is youre body, whiche withinne vii dayes that[4] the soule ys parted from the body, he saverithe[5] in suche wise that no creatoure may suffre to be nigh it or see it, with[out] gret abhominacion? Faire suster, whi thenke ye not of[6] the pore peple that deyen for hungir and colde, that for the sixte part of youre gay arraye xl persones might be clothed, refresshed, and kepte from the colde?' And thus Bernarde declared the foly and the pompe of the worlde to his suster, and also the savement of her soule. And thanne the ladi wepte, and solde awey her clothes, and levid after an holy lyff, and had love of God, aungeles, and holy seintez, the whiche is beter thanne of the worldely pepill.

GESTA ROMANORUM: THE MAGIC IMAGE

The *Gesta Romanorum* is a series of mediæval tales and their morals, originally written in Latin, and widely used for further artistic development or for illustrative material by the writers and preachers of the later Middle Ages. In the collection are versions of the tale of Constance which Chaucer tells in his *Man of Law's Tale*, of Shakespeare's bond- and casket-incidents in *The Merchant of Venice*, and of the Lear story; and many less-known tales appear in later poems and ballads. The date, authorship, and origin of the series are doubtful; for discussions of them see the Latin version, ed. Oesterley, 1872, revised 1877, and the Early English Text Society's reprint of the Middle English versions (ed. Herrtage, 1879; Ex. Ser. 33). Cf. also Swan's translation of the Latin *Gesta Romanorum* in the Bohn Library.

The following selection is from Herrtage's reprint of MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 7333, and is No. 3 of the series of tales (pp. 7–8). The Middle English versions (3 manuscripts) are all dated in the reign of Henry VI (1422–1461).

Our story has been versified by William Morris as *The Writing on the Image*, in *The Earthly Paradise*.

[1] made the sign of the cross
[2] took off
[3] adorn
[4] from the time when
[5] it has an odor
[6] MS. that

Deoclician was emperour in þe cite of Rome, in þe empire of whom was a philosophre, callid Lenoppus, þe which had bi his crafte sette up an ymage, þe which put out an hond with a fynger, and upon the finger was wretyn wordis, *Percute hic*, that is to say, 'Smite here.' This ymage stode þer long, and many a day after þe deth of þe philosophre; and many come to þis finger, and radde the superscripcion, but þey undirstode it not, and therfore þei hadde moch marvaile what it shuld mene. So in a certeyne tyme þer com a clerke of ferr contreys, and ofte tymis he sawe þis ymage, and þis finger with þe scripture.[1] And in a certeyne day he toke a shovill, and dyggyd in the erth, undir þe superscripcion. And anon he fond a hous of marbill undir þe erth; and thanne he went down, and enterid into the hall, and þer he fond so many riche jewelis and marvelous þingys, that no tunge cowde tell. Aftir þis he sawe a bord or a table, isprad with rich metys ynowe þeruppon. Thenne he lokid afer,[2] and sawe stonding a charbuncle ston, the which ȝaf liȝt over all the hous; and aȝenst hit stod a man, with a bowe in his hond, redy for to schete. This clerke perceivid well this sight, and þou[ȝ]te, þoȝ I tell þis siȝt[3] whenne I am ago[4] hens, no man woll trowe[5] me, and þerfore I woll take som of þis goode in tokne. He stirte to þe bord, and tooke a faire gilt cowpe, and put it up; and anoon the man with þe bowe sheet to the charbuncle ston so soore that it ȝede[6] onsundre, and þo was all the liȝt agon, and þe hous was full of dorknesse. And whenne þe clerke sawe þis, he wepte soore, for he wiste not how to passe out, for dorknesse. And þerfore he dwelte þer still, and þer he endyd his lif, etc.

Moralite. Goode men, þis ymage that is thus ypaynt[7] is the devell, þe which seith evermore: *Percute hic*, 'Smyte here,' that is to sey, he puttith in our hertes erthely thingis, and biddith us take hem, but he woll never speke of hevinly thingis. The clerke þat smytith with the shovill bitokenyth þe wise men of þis wordle,[8] and ben advocatis and pletouris,[9] þe which by sotilte and wickidnesse getith þe goode of þis wordle, and þe vanyteys of þis wordle. And whenne thei have geten hem with such worching, they fyndith many marveilous þingis, þat is

[1] inscription, writing
[2] afar
[3] MS. sigth
[4] gone
[5] believe
[6] parted
[7] painted
[8] world
[9] pleaders

to sey, dilectabill þingis of þe wordle, in þe which þei have gret dilectation. The charbuncle ston þat ȝevith liȝt is þe yowth of man, þe whicl ȝevith to man hardinesse to have dilectacion and liking of[1] wordly[2] þingis. The archer þat shetith is deth, þe which stondith evermor redy in awaite,[3] for to shete his dart. Now the clerke þanne takith knyfe — what is that? The wordly man, trowing to have all thingi at his owne will. But in that trust the archer shetith att þe charbuncl ston, that is to sey, deth shetith his schotys to þe ȝowth of man, an smytith his strength[4] and his myȝte; and þenne lieth the yowth i derkenesse of synne, in the which derkenesse many men oftyn tym deyeth. And þerefore lat us fle all lustys and all likingys, and þenn we schull not faile of everlasting liȝt, *ad quam nos perducat*, etc.

THE BESTIARY

The *Bestiary*, or *Physiologus*, had a history of something like a thousan years before it entered Middle English, which it did as a translation from th Latin of a certain Theobaldus; his work had been already rendered int French by Philippe de Thaon, who dedicated his version to Adela, secon wife (1121) of Henry I of England. The Middle English version belongs t ca. 1220.

The two subjects dealt with below — the Whale (Turtle) and the Panthe — are also treated in Old English poetry (see my edition of the Old Englis *Elene, Phœnix,* and *Physiologus* (New Haven, 1919), where a much fulle account is given, with references to the bibliography of the subject).

Our text is derived from Mätzner, *Altenglische Sprachproben* (1. 55–75 which in turn reproduces Wright and Halliwell, *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* 1. 208–2 Emendations are by Mätzner, and (of the *Whale*) by Emerson (*Middle Englis Reader*); others are mine.

THE WHALE (TURTLE)

Cethegrande[5] is a fis,[6]
Ðe moste[7] ðat in water is;
Ðat tu wuldes seien[8] get,
Gef ðu it soge[9] wan it flet,[10]

[1] MS. the
[2] worldly
[3] waiting
[4] MS. strenght
[5] whale (*properly*, turtle)
[6] fish
[7] largest
[8] say
[9] saw
[10] flote

Ðat it were an eilond[1]
Ðat sete[2] on[3] ðe se-sond.[4]
  Ðis fis ðat is unride,[5]
Ðanne him hungreð, he gapeð wide;
Ut of his ðrote it smit[6] an onde,[7]
Ðe swetteste ðing ðat is o londe.
Ðerfore oðre fisses to him dragen[8];
Wan he it felen he aren fagen[9];
He cumen and hoven[10] in his muð;
Of his swike[11] he arn uncuð.[12]
Ðis cete[13] ðanne hise chaveles[14] lukeð,[15]
Ðise fisses alle in sukeð;
Ðe smale he wile ðus biswiken,[16]
Ðe grete maig he nogt bigripen.[17]
  Ðis fis wuneð wið ðe se-grund,[18]
And liveð ðer evre heil and sund,[19]
Til it cumeð ðe time
Ðat storm stireð al ðe se,
Ðanne sumer and winter winnen.[20]
Ne mai it wunen ðerinne[n],
So drovi[21] is te sees grund,
Ne mai he wunen ðer ðat stund,[22]
Oc stireð up[23] and hoveð stille.
Wiles[24] ðat[25] weder is so ille,
Ðe sipes[26] ðat arn on se fordriven[27] —
Loð hem is deð,[28] and lef[29] to liven —
Biloken[30] hem, and sen ðis fis;
An eilond he wenen[31] it is.

1 island
2 sat
3 MS. one (em. E.)
4 sea-sand (nom.)
5 unwieldy, bulky
6 emits
7 breath
8 draw near
9 glad
10 abide
11 trickery
12 ignorant
13 sea-monster
14 jaws
15 shuts
16 deceive
17 seize, get hold of
18 dwells near the bottom of the sea
19 well and sound
20 contend
21 turbid
22 at that time
23 rises
24 while
25 MS. ðar (em. E.)
26 ships
27 driven about
28 MS. ded (em. E.)
29 dear, pleasant
30 look about
31 they suppose

Ðerof he aren swiðe fagen,
And mid here migt ðarto he dragen
Sipes on festen,[1]
And alle up gangen,
Of ston mid stel in ðe tunder[2]
Wel to brennen[3] on[4] ðis wunder,
Warmen hem wel, and eten[5] and drinken.
Ðe fir he feleð, and doð[6] hem sinken,
For sone he diveð dun to grunde;
He drepeð[7] hem alle wiðuten wunde.

Significacio. Ðis devel is mikel wið wil and magt
(So[8] wicches[9] haven in here craft);
He doð men hungren, and haven ðrist,[10]
And mani oðer sinful list,[11]
Tolleð[12] men to him wið his onde,
Woso him folegeð,[13] he findeð sonde.[14]
Ðo arn ðe little in[15] leve[16] lage[17];
Ðe mikle ne maig he to him dragen —
Ðe mikle, I mene ðe stedefast
In rigte leve mid fles[18] and gast.
Woso listneð develes lore,
On lengðe it sal him rewen[19] sore;
Woso festeð[20] hope on him,
He sal him folgen to helle dim.

[1] with reference to fastening, for the purpose of anchoring
[2] tinder
[3] make a fire
[4] MS. one (em. E.)
[5] MS. heten (em. E.)
[6] causes
[7] slays
[8] such as
[9] enchanters; MS. witches (em. E.)
[10] thirst
[11] pleasure
[12] draw; MS. colleð (em. E.)
[13] follows; MS. folgeð (em. E.)
[14] shame
[15] (who are) in
[16] faith
[17] low
[18] body
[19] rue; MS. reven (em. E.)
[20] fasteneth (alluding to the anchorage and landing)

THE PANTHER

Panter is an wilde der,
Is non fairere on werlde her;
He is blac so bon[1] of qual,[2]
Mid[3] wite spottes sapen[4] al,
Wit, and trendled[5] als a wel,[6]
And it[7] bicumeð him swiðe wel.
Worso he wuneð, ðis panter,
He fedeð him al mid oðer der;
Of ðo ðe he wile he nimeð ðe cul,[8]
And fet him[9] wel til he is ful.
In his hole siðen[10] stille
Ðre dages he slepen wille;
Ðan after ðe ðridde dai
He riseð and remeð[11] lude so[12] he mai.
Ut of his ðrote cumeð a smel
Mid his rem forð over al,
Ðat overcumeth haliweie[13]
Wið swetnesse, Ic gu[14] seie;
And al ðat evre smelleð swete,
Be it drie, be it wete.
For ðe swetnesse off his onde,
Worso[15] he walkeð o londe,
Worso he walkeð,[16] er worso he wuneð,[17]
Ilk der ðe him hereð to him cumeð,
And folegeð him upon[18] ðe wold,
For ðe swetnesse ðe Ic gu have told.
Ðe dragunes one[19] ne stiren nout
Wiles[20] te panter rameð ogt,[21]

1 bone; MS. bro
2 whale
3 MS. mið
4 fashioned
5 round
6 wheel
7 MS. itt (em. M.)
8 choice, best
9 himself
10 afterwards
11 roars
12 loud as
13 balsam
14 to you
15 wheresoever
16 MS. walked
17 dwells
18 MS. upone
19 alone
20 while
21 anything, at all

Oc daren[1] stille in here pit,
Als so[2] he weren of deðe[3] offrigt.[4]
Significacio. Crist is tokned ðurg ðis der,
Wos kinde[5] we haven told gu her;
For he is faier over alle men,
So evensterre over erðe fen[6];
Ful wel he taunede[7] his luve to man
Wan he ðurg holi spel him wan;
And longe he lai her in an hole —
Wel him ðat[8] he it wulde ðolen[9]:
Þre daies slep he al onon,[10]
Þanne he ded was in blod and bon.
Up he ros, and remede iwis[11] —
Of helle pine, of hevene blis —
And steg[12] to hevene uvemest[13];
Þer wuneð wið Fader and Holi Gast.
Amonges men a swete smel[14]
He let herof — his holi spel,[15]
Worðurg we mugen folgen him
Into his godcundnesse[16] fin.[17]
And ðat wirm,[18] ure widerwine[19] —
Worso[20] of Godes word is dine[21]
Ne dar he stiren, ne no man deren,[22]
Þe[23] while he[24] lage[25] and luve beren.

1 crouch, cower
2 if
3 death; MS. dede
4 frightened
5 nature
6 mire
7 manifested
8 MS. dat
9 endure
10 uninterruptedly
11 MS. in wis (em. M.)
12 ascended
13 on high; MS. uvenest (em. M.)
14 MS. mel. (em. M.)
15 teaching
16 divinity's
17 utmost reach
18 serpent
19 adversary
20 whereso
21 mention (*lit.* din); MS. ðine
22 injure
23 MS. ðer (em. M.)
24 they
25 law

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

The Owl and the Nightingale is the earliest specimen in English of the true contention-poem — a verbal contest for supremacy — analogous to the Latin, French, and Provençal *partimen*, *tenson*, *plait*, *jeu-parti*, etc. Its main subject, after the opening personalities, is joy and æstheticism, represented by the nightingale, as opposed to practicality and seriousness, represented by the owl. In Fritz Reuter's *Hanne Nüte* (Part 9), the sparrow and the nightingale contrast their modes of life:

'Gu'n Abend, Jochen,' seggt sei, 'na?
Ik bün taurügg ut Afrika.' —
'Ja,' segg ik, 'süllst di brav wat schämen,
So in de Welt herüm tau striken,
Bliw hir bi uns, bi dinesgliken!
An Lotten kannst en Bispill nemen,
De brött nu all den tweiten Satz.' —
Dunn lacht s' un seggt: 'Mein lieber Spatz,
Dein Lotting ist ein braves Weib,
Un Essen kochen, Strümpfe knütten,
Un Junge aus die Eier sitten
Ist sicher auch ein Zeitvertreib;
Doch wir, die in der Poesie
Die Aufgab' unsres Lebens finnen,
Wir Künstler und wir Sängerinnen,
Wir knütten, Jochen, un brüten nie.'

'In a group of poets that were active in the South of England at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the author of *The Owl and the Nightingale* stands preëminent. Of striking vigor and originality of mind, possessing a sane critical judgment founded on a considerable culture, and endowed with astonishing poetical gifts for his time and environment, he produced a composition that seems the earliest, and from many points of view the best, original long poem of a wholly imaginative character written in English before the time of Chaucer' (Wells' ed., p. xxxvii). Elsewhere Wells says: 'Theme and treatment grew out of the poet's own immediate experience. . . . The poem is notable in its period for its embodiment of the distinctly national tone and spirit that were beginning to grow out of the amalgamation of the French and the English, the learned and the popular, in the island.' This author's identity is unknown; it would seem probable that he is *not* the Nicholas of Guildford chosen by the disputants as judge.

The poem is found in two manuscripts. Our selection (made with the kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. D. C. Heath & Co.) is from John Edwin Wells' reproduction of MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Caligula A. 9, which belongs to the first half of the thirteenth century, with his emendations, and a few of my own. The selection includes lines 1–94, 101–285, 287–348.

Ich was in one sumere[1] dale,
In one suþe[2] diȝele[3] hale,[4]
Iherde Ich holde grete tale[5]
An hule[6] and one[7] niȝtingale.
Þat plait[8] was stif and starc[9] and strong,
Sum wile[10] softe and lud[11] among[12];
An[13] aiþer aȝen oþer sval,[14]
And let þat wole[15] mod[16] ut al.
And eiþer seide of oþeres custe[17]
Þat alreworste[18] þat hi wuste;
And hure and hure[19] of oþere[s] songe,
Hi holde plaiding[20] suþe stronge.
Þe niȝtingale bigon þe speche
In one hurne[21] of one beche,[22]
And sat up[on] one vaire boȝe,[23]
Þar were abute blosme inoȝe,
In ore[24] waste[25] þicke hegge,
Imeind[26] mid spire[27] and grene segge.
Ho[28] was þe gladur vor þe rise,[29]
And song a vele[30] cunne wise[31]:
Bet[32] þuȝte þe dreim[33] þat he were
Of harpe and pipe þan he nere,
Bet þuȝte þat he were ishote[34]
Of harpe and pipe þan of þrote.
Þo stod on old stoc[35] þar biside,
Þar þo ule song hire tide,[36]

[1] a certain
[2] very
[3] secluded
[4] out of the way spot
[5] dispute
[6] owl
[7] a
[8] debate
[9] severe, sharp
[10] sometimes
[11] loud
[12] at intervals
[13] and
[14] grew swollen with wrath
[15] evil
[16] mood
[17] character
[18] very worst
[19] at all events
[20] debate
[21] corner, nook
[22] valley; MS. breche
[23] a fair bough
[24] a
[25] solitary
[26] mingled
[27] tall grass
[28] she
[29] twig, branch
[30] in many
[31] kinds of ways
[32] rather (better); MS. het (em. W.
[33] seemed the music
[34] shot, poured forth
[35] stump
[36] at her time, when her time cam

And was mid ivi al bigrowe:
Hit was þare hule earding-stowe.[1]
  Þe niȝtingale hi iseȝ,[2]
And hi bihold and overseȝ,[3]
And þuȝte wel wl[4] of þare hule,
For me hi halt[5] lodlich and fule.[6]
'Unwiȝt,[7]' ho sede, 'awei þu flo[8]!
Me is þe wrs[9] þat Ich þe so.[10]
Iwis for þine wle[11] lete[12]
Wel oft Ich mine song forlete[13];
Min horte atfliþ,[14] and falt[15] mi tonge,
Wonne þu art to me iþrunge.[16]
Me luste bet speten[17] þane singe,
Of[18] þine fule ȝoȝelinge.[19]'
  Þos[20] hule abod fort[21] hit was eve,
Ho ne miȝte no leng[22] bileve,[23]
Vor hire horte was so gret
Þat wel neȝ hire fnast[24] atschet,[25]
And warp[26] a word[27] þarafter longe:
'Hu þinc[þ] þe[28] nu bi mine songe?
We[n]st þu[29] þat Ich ne cunne singe,
Þeȝ Ich ne cunne of writelinge[30]?
[Oft and] ilome[31] þu dest me grame,[32]
And seist me boþe tone[33] and schame.
Ȝif Ich þe holde on mine vote[34] —
So hit bitide[35] þat Ich mote! —

1 the owl's dwelling-place
2 saw her
3 looked at with scorn
4 evilly
5 men consider her
6 loathsome and foul
7 monster
8 flee (imp.)
9 worse
10 see
11 evil
12 behavior, noise
13 abandon, stop
14 flees away
15 falters
16 pressed close, drawn close
17 I would rather spit
18 because of
19 guggling
20 this
21 until
22 longer
23 remain silent
24 breath
25 shot away, burst forth
26 poured out (*lit.* threw)
27 speech
28 seems it to you
29 do you suppose
30 trilling
31 often
32 harm, injury
33 reproach
34 foot
35 would that it might happen

And þu were ut of þine rise,
Þu sholdest singe an oþer w[i]se.[1]'
Þe niȝtingale ȝaf answare:
'Ȝif Ich me loki[2] wit þe bare,[3]
And me schilde wit þe blete,[4]
Ne reche Ich noȝt of þine þrete:
Ȝif Ich me holde in mine hegge,
Ne recche Ich never what þu segge.[5]
Ich wot þat þu art unmilde[6]
Wiþ hom[7] þat ne muȝe from þe[8] schilde;
And þu tukest[9] wroþe[10] and uvele
Whar þu miȝt over smale fuȝele.[11]
Vorþi[12] þu art loþ[13] al fuel-kunne,[14]
And alle ho[15] þe driveþ honne,[16]
And þe bischricheþ[17] and bigredet,[18]
And wel narewe[19] þe biledet[20];
And ek forþe[21] þe sulve mose,[22]
Hire þonkes,[23] wolde þe totose.[24]
Þu art lodlich to biholde,
And þu art loþ in monie volde[25]:
Þi bodi is short, þi swore[26] is smal,
Grettere is þin heved þan þu al;
Þin eȝene boþ col-blake and brode,
Riȝt swo ho weren ipeint[27] mid wode[28];
Þu starest so[29] þu wille abiten[30]
Al þat þu miȝt[31] mid clivre[32] smiten;
Þi bile is stif and scharp and hoked,
Riȝt so an owel[33] þat is croked,

1 in another fashion
2 may protect myself
3 against the open
4 exposure
5 say
6 harsh
7 those
8 MS. se
9 domineer
10 angrily
11 birds
12 therefore
13 hateful
14 bird-kind
15 they all
16 hence
17 screech at
18 cry out at
19 closely
20 pursue
21 because of that
22 the very titmouse
23 willingly
24 pull to pieces
25 in manifold ways
26 neck
27 painted
28 woad
29 as if
30 bite to pieces
31 might; MS. mist
32 claws
33 just like an awl

Þarmid þu clackes[t] oft and longe,
And þat is on [1] of þine songe.
Ac þu þretest to [2] mine fleshe,
Mid þine clivres woldest me meshe.[3]
Þe were icundur to one frogge [4]:
Þat sit at mulne [5] under cogge [6];
Snailes, mus,[7] and fule wiȝte,[8]
Boþ þine cunde and þine riȝte.[9]
Þu sittest adai,[10] and fliȝ[s]t aniȝt,
Þu cuþest [11] þat þu art on unwiȝt.
Þu art lodlich and unclene,
Bi [12] þine neste Ich hit mene,
And ek bi þine fule brode [13]—
Þu fedest on hom a wel ful fode.[14]
Þat oþer ȝer [15] a faukun bredde [16];
His nest noȝt wel he ne bihedde [17]:
Þarto þu stele in o [18] day,
And leidest þaron þi fole ey.[19]
Þo hit bicom [20] þat he haȝte,[21]
And of his eyre [22] briddes wraȝte,
Ho broȝte his briddes mete,
Bihold his nest, iseȝ hi [23] ete:
He iseȝ bi one halve [24]
His nest ifuled uthalve.[25]
Þe faucun was wroþ wit his bridde,
And lude ȝal [26] and sterne chidde:
"Segget me, wo [27] havet þis ido?
Ou nas never icunde [28] þarto;

[1] one
[2] make threats against
[3] crush to a pulp
[4] it would be more suitable for you to have a frog (for food)
[5] the mill
[6] cog; this line is supplied from J.— lacking in C.
[7] mice
[8] creatures
[9] are for thy kind and fit for thy deserts
[10] by day
[11] knowest
[12] concerning
[13] brood
[14] thou feedest in them a very foul lot (*lit.* offspring)
[15] year
[16] bred
[17] guarded
[18] one
[19] foul egg
[20] when it happened
[21] it (the falcon) hatch
[22] its eggs
[23] watched them
[24] on one side
[25] on the outer part
[26] cried out aloud
[27] who
[28] innate, natural

Hit was idon ow a loþ custe.[1]
Segge me ȝif ȝe hit wiste."
Þo quaþ þat on and quad þat oþer:
"Iwis it was ure oȝer[2] broþer,
Þe ȝond[3] þat haved þat grete heved:
Wai þat hi[t] nis þarof bireved[4]!
Worp hit[5] ut mid þe alre-wrste,
Þat his necke him toberste!"
Þe faucun ilefde[6] his bridde,
And nom[7] þat fule brid amidde,[8]
And warp hit of[9] þan wilde bowe,[10]
Þar[11] pie[12] and crowe hit todrowe.
Herbi men segget a bispel,[13]
Þeȝ hit ne bo fuliche spel[14]:
Al so[15] hit is bi þan ungode[16]
Þat is icumen of fule brode,
And is meind wit fro monne[17];
Ever he cuþ þat he com þonne,[18]
Þat he com of þan adel eye,[19]
Þeȝ he a fro nest[20] leie.
Þeȝ appel trendli[21] from[22] þon trowe,[23]
Þar he and oþer mid growe,
Þeȝ he bo[24] þarfrom bicume,[25]
He cuþ wel whonene he is icume.'
Þos word aȝaf[26] þe niȝtingale,
And after þare longe tale
He song so lude and so scharpe,
Riȝt so me grulde[27] schille[28] harpe.

[1] in a disagreeable manner; custe *for* MS. wiste
[2] own
[3] the one yonder
[4] alas that he is not bereft of it
[5] throw him
[6] believed
[7] took, seized
[8] by the middle
[9] cast it from
[10] bough
[11] where
[12] magpies
[13] in fable, parable
[14] long story
[15] just so
[16] with the evil person
[17] mingled with noble (well-born) men
[18] thence
[19] addled egg
[20] in a noble nest
[21] roll (trundle)
[22] MS. fron
[23] tree
[24] be
[25] gone
[26] uttered
[27] as if some one were twan
[28] shrill

Þos hule luste[1] þiderward,
And hold hire eȝe[2] noþerwa[r]d,[3]
And sat tosvolle[4] and ibolwe,[5]
Also ho hadde one frogge isuolȝe,[6]
For ho wel wiste and was iwar
Þat ho song hire a bisemar,[7]
And noþeles ho ȝaf[8] andsuare:
'Whi neltu[9] flon into þe bare,[10]
And sewi[11] ware[12] unker[13] bo[14]
Of briȝter howe,[15] of vairur blo[16]?'
'No, þu havest wel scharpe clawe,
Ne kep[17] Ich noȝt þat þu me clawe;
Þu havest clivers suþe stronge,
Þu tuengst[18] þarmid so doþ a tonge.
Þu þoȝtest, so doþ þine ilike,[19]
Mid faire worde me biswike[20];
Ich nolde don þat þu me rad[d]est,[21]
Ich wiste wel þat þu me misraddest.
Schamie þe for þin unrede[22]!
Unwroȝen[23] is þi svikelhede[24]!
Schild þine svikeldom vram þe liȝte,
And hud[25] þat woȝe[26] amon[g] þe riȝte.
Wane[27] þu wilt þin unriȝt[28] spene,[29]
Loke þat hit ne bo isene,
Vor svike[l]dom haved schome and hete,[30]
Ȝif hit is ope[31] and underȝete.[32]
Ne speddestu[33] noȝt mid þine unwrenche,[34]

1 listened
2 eyes
3 cast down
4 swollen with anger
5 puffed with wrath
6 swallowed
7 in scorn of her
8 MS. ȝas (*f* penciled in margin)
9 will you not
10 the open
11 show
12 MS. þare
13 which (whether) of us two
14 is
15 hue
16 complexion, appearance (bloom)
17 care, wish
18 press tightly, nip
19 as do those of thy sort
20 to deceive, betray
21 counseled
22 ill advice
23 revealed
24 treachery
25 hide
26 wrong
27 MS. þane
28 injustice, wrong
29 spend, show forth
30 hate
31 open, apparent
32 perceived
33 you did not succeed
34 trick

For Ich am war,[1] and can wel blenche.[2]
Ne helpþ noȝt þat þu bo to [þ]riste[3]:
Ich wolde viȝte bet mid liste[4]
Þan þu mid al þine strengþe.
Ich habbe on brede[5] and ech on lengþ
Castel god on mine rise;
"Wel fiȝt þat wel fliȝt,"[6] seiþ þe wise.
Ac lete we awei þos cheste,[7]
Vor suiche wordes boþ unwreste[8];
And fo we on[9] mid riȝte dome,[10]
Mid faire worde and mid ysome.[11]
Þeȝ we ne bo at one acorde,
We muȝe bet mid fayre worde,
Witute cheste, and bute fiȝte,
Plaidi[12] mid foȝe[13] and mid riȝte,
And mai hure[14] eiþer wat hi wile
Mid riȝte segge and mid sckile.'
  Þo quaþ þe hule: 'Wu[15] schal us seme,[16]
Þat kunne and wille riȝt us deme[17]?'
  'Ich wot wel,' quaþ þe niȝtingale,
'Ne þaref[18] þarof bo no tale.[19]
Maister Nichole of Guldeforde,[20]
He is wis an war of worde;
He is of dome suþe gleu,[21]
And him is loþ evrich unþeu.[22]
He wot insiȝt in[23] eche songe—
Wo singet wel, wo singet wronge;
And he can schede[24] vrom þe riȝte
Þat woȝe,[25] þat þuster[26] from þe liȝte.'

1 wary, cautious
2 avoid by shrinking
3 bold
4 cunning
5 breadth
6 cf. *Proverbs of Hendyng*, st. 10 (Harl. MS.)
7 let us be done with this strife
8 unavailing; MS. unwerste
9 let us begin
10 judgment
11 peaceable
12 debate
13 propriety
14 of us
15 who; MS. þu
16 reconcile
17 judge
18 need
19 dispute
20 Nicholas of Guildford, spoken of in lines 1752-3 of the poem as living at Portesham, in Dorset
21 wise, prudent
22 vice, bad habit
23 has intelligence in, knows
24 separate, distinguish
25 wrong
26 darkness

Þo hule one wile hi biþoȝte,[1]
And after þan þis word upbroȝte:
'Ich granti wel þat he us deme,
Vor þeȝ he were wile[2] breme,[3]
And lof[4] him were niȝtingale,
And oþer wiȝte[5] gente and smale,
Ich wot he is nu suþe acoled.[6]
Nis he vor þe noȝt afoled,[7]
Þat he, for þine olde luve,
Me adun[8] legge[9] and þe buve;
Ne schaltu nevre so him queme[10]
Þat he for þe fals dom deme.
He is him ripe[11] and fastrede,[12]
Ne lust[13] him nu to none unrede[14];
Nu him ne lust na more pleie,
He wile gon a[15] riȝte weie.'
Þe niȝtingale was al ȝare,[16]
Ho hadde ilorned[17] wel aiware[18];
'Hule,' ho sede, 'seie me soþ,
Wi dostu þat unwiȝtis[19] doþ?
Þu singist aniȝt and noȝt adai,
And al þi song is "Wailawai!"
Þu miȝt mid þine songe afere[20]
Alle þat ihereþ þine ibere[21];
Þu schrichest[22] and ȝollest[23] to þine fere,[24]
Þat hit is grislich[25] to ihere;
Hit þincheþ[26] boþe wise and snepe,[27]
Noȝt þat þu singe, ac þat þu wepe.
Þu fliȝst aniȝt and noȝt adai;

1 bethought herself for a time
2 at one time
3 spirited, passionate
4 dear
5 creatures
6 much cooled
7 befooled
8 below
9 would place (lay)
10 please
11 mature
12 of firm purpose
13 pleases
14 unwise action
15 in
16 ready
17 learned
18 nearly everywhere (OE. *ǣghwǣr*)
19 monsters
20 terrify
21 noise, clamor
22 screechest; MS. schirchest
23 call out
24 companion
25 horrible
26 MS. þinchest
27 to wise and to foolish

Þarof Ich wndri,[1] and wel mai,
Vor evrich þing þat schuniet[2] rizt,
Hit luveþ þuster and hatiet[3] lizt;
And evrich þing þat is lof misdede,[4]
Hit luveþ þuster to[5] his dede.
A wis word, þez hit bo unclene,
Is fele manne[6] a muþe[7] imene,[8]
For Alvred King hit seide and wrot:
"He schunet þat hine wl wot.[9]"
Ich wene þat þu dost also,
Vor þu flizst niztes evermo.
Anoþer þing me is awene[10] —
Þu havest anizt wel brizte sene[11];
Bi daie þu art stareblind,[12]
Þat þu ne sichst ne bo[u] ne rind.[13]
Adai þu art blind oþer bisne,[14]
Þarbi men segget a uorbisne:
"Rizt so hit farþ bi þan ungode,
Þat nozt ne suþ to[15] none gode,
And is so ful of uvele wrenche[16]
Þat him ne mai no man atwrenche,[17]
And can[18] wel þane[19] þustre[20] wai,
And þane brizte lat awai.[21]"
So doþ þat boþ[22] of þine cunde,
Of lizte nabbeþ hi none imunde.[23]'
  Þos hule luste suþe longe,
And was oftoned[24] suþ[e] stronge.
Ho quaþ: 'Þu [h]attest[25] niztingale;
Þu miztest bet hoten[26] galegale,[27]

[1] wonder
[2] shuns
[3] hates
[4] to which evil-doing is dear
[5] for
[6] of many men
[7] in the mouths
[8] commonly
[9] that which knows him to be foul
[10] is in my thoughts
[11] power of vision
[12] purblind
[13] see neither bough nor bark
[14] of dim sight
[15] looks toward
[16] guile, trickery
[17] evade, elude; MS. -prenche
[18] knows
[20] dark; MS. þurste
[21] abandons the bright o
[22] those that are
[23] thought
[24] irritated
[25] are called
[26] better be called
[27] chatterbox

Vor þu havest to monie tale.[1]
Lat þine tunge habbe spale[2]!
Þu wenest þat þes dai bo þin oʒe[3];
Lat me nu habbe mine þroʒe[4];
Bo nu stille and lat me speke,
Ich wille bon of þe awreke.[5]
And lust[6] hu Ich con me bitelle,[7]
Mid riʒte soþe, witute spelle.[8]
Þu seist þat Ich me hude adai,
Þarto ne segge Ich nich ne nai[9];
And lust, Ich telle þe warevore,
Al wi hit is and warevore.
Ich habbe bile stif and stronge,
And gode clivers scharp and longe,
So hit bicumeþ[10] to havekes cunne;
Hit is min hiʒte,[11] hit is mi wune,[12]
Þat Ich me draʒe[13] to mine cunde,
Ne mai [me] no man þarevore schende[14];
On me hit is wel isene,
Vor riʒte cunde[15] Ich am so kene.
Vorþi Ich am loþ smale foʒle[16]
Þat floþ bi[17] grunde an bi þuvele[18]:
Hi me bichermet[19] and bigredeþ,[20]
And hore[21] flockes to me ledeþ.
Me is lof to habbe reste,
And sitte stille in mine neste;
Vor nere Ich never no þe betere,
Ʒif[22] Ich mid chavling[23] and mid chatere
Hom schende, and mid fule worde. . . .
Ne lust me[24] wit þe screwen[25] chide,[26]

1 tales
2 respite, rest
3 own
turn
avenged
listen
justify
a long story
no nor nay

10 is fitting
11 joy
12 delight
13 turn me
14 blame, revile
15 from very nature
16 to small birds
17 near
18 bushes

19 scream at
20 cry out upon
21 their
22 MS. þif
23 scolding
24 it does not please me
25 evil persons
26 to contend

Forþi Ich wende[1] from hom wide.[2]
Hit is a wise monne dome,[3]
And hi hit segget wel ilome,[4]
Þat me ne[5] chide wit þe gidie,[6]
Ne wit þan ofne[7] me ne ȝonie.[8]
At sume siþe herde I telle
Hu Alvred sede on his spelle[9]:
"Loke þat þu ne bo þare
Þar[10] chavling boþ and cheste ȝare;
Lat sottes[11] chide, and vorþ þu go";
And Ich am wis, and do also.
And ȝet Alvred seide, an oþer side,[12]
A word þat is isprunge[13] wide:
"Þat wit þe fule haveþ imene,[14]
Ne cumeþ he never from him cleine."
Wenestu þat haveck bo þe worse
Þoȝ crowe bigrede[15] him bi þe mershe,
And goþ to him mid hore chirme[16]
Riȝt so hi wille wit him schirme[17]?
Þe havec folȝeþ gode rede,[18]
And fliȝt his wei, and lat him[19] grede.[20]
Ȝet þu me seist of oþer þinge,
And telst þat Ich ne can noȝt singe,
Ac al mi rorde[21] is woning,[22]
And to ihire grislich[23] þing.
Þat nis noȝt soþ, Ich singe efne,[24]
Mid fulle dreme[25] and lude stefne.[26]
Þu wenist[27] þat ech song bo grislich

[1] turn
[2] far
[3] in the judgment of wise men
[4] often
[5] they do not
[6] foolish
[7] oven, furnace
[8] yawn
[9] instruction
[10] where
[11] fools
[12] on the other hand
[13] spread
[14] he who has companionship with the foul
[15] cry out upon
[16] uproar
[17] fight
[18] counsel
[19] MS. ham
[20] cry out
[21] speech
[22] lamenting
[23] horrible
[24] evenly
[25] melody
[26] voice
[27] thinkest

Þat þine pipinge nis ilich.[1]
Mi stefne is bold[2] and noȝt unorne,[3]
Ho is ilich one grete horne,
And þin is ilich one pipe
Of one smale wode[4] unripe.
Ich singe bet þan þu dest;
Þu chaterest so doþ on Irish prost.
Ich singe an eve, a riȝte time,[5]
And soþþe won hit is bedtime,
Þe þridde siþe at[6] middelniȝte;
And so Ich mine song adiȝte[7]
Wone Ich iso[8] arise vorre[9]
Oþer dairim[10] oþer daisterre.
Ich do god mid mine þrote,
And warni men to hore note.[11]
Ac þu singest alle longe niȝt,
From eve fort[12] hit is dailiȝt,
And evre seist þin o song
So longe so þe niȝt is long;
And evre croweþ þi wrecche crei,[13]
Þat he ne swikeþ[14] niȝt ne dai.
Mid þine pipinge þu adunest[15]
Þas monnes earen þar þu wunest,
And makest þine song so unwrþ[16]
Þa[t] me ne telþ of þar noȝ[t] wrþ.[17]
Evrich murȝþe[18] mai so longe ileste,
Þat ho shal liki[19] wel unwreste,[20]
Vor harpe, and pipe, and fuȝeles songe
Mislikeþ, ȝif hit is to long.
Ne bo þe song never so murie,

1 is not like
2 MS. blod
3 feeble
4 weed
5 in the evening, at the proper time
6 MS. ad
7 arrange, prepare
8 see
9 afar
10 daybreak
11 profit, advantage
12 until
13 crying
14 ceases
15 dinnest
16 unworthy
17 that men set no store by it
18 joy
19 please
20 ill

þat he ne shal þinche wel unmu
Ʒef he ilesteþ[3] over wille[4];
So þu miʒt þine song aspille.[5]

PIERS THE PLOWMAN

Until 1906, the work called *The Vision* (rather, *Book*) *of William concerning Piers the Plowman* had been for a generation attributed, on the faith of two fifteenth-century memoranda, to William Langland, or Langley, whom Skeat believed to have been born about 1332, and to have died about 1400. Three texts of the poem have been printed, of which the second and third (known as B and C) are revisions and extensions of the first (A). The dates assigned to these are: A, 1362; B, 1377; C, after 1390 (probably about 1398). The A-text has 2567 lines, the B-text 7242, and the C-text 7357. All have been edited by Skeat in two volumes (Oxford, 1886).

Professor John M. Manly presents his view, which differs in many respects from that hitherto received, in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. 2. According to him, the twelve cantos, or passus, contained in A, were the work of two different authors, of whom the second wrote Passus 9–12, while B and C represent two revisions, so that there would have been four authors; but since he finds 61 lines at the end of the A-text (12. 57–105, and 12 lines not given in Skeat's large edition, 1. 331) to have been written by a certain John But (or Butt), the whole number of authors would be five.

On the theory of the single authorship, Jusserand has an illuminating chapter in Vol. 1 of his *Literary History of the English People*. For a general bibliography, see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 2. 490–7.

The passages given below are all from the B-text. They differ so inconsiderably from the A-text that Manly's characterization of the style of the latter sufficiently holds concerning them (*op. cit.* p. 13): 'As to the style, no summary or paraphrase can reproduce its picturesqueness and verve. It is always simple, direct, evocative of a constant series of clear and sharply-defined images of individuals and groups. Little or no attempt is made at elaborate, or even ordinarily full, description, and color-words are singularly few; but it would be difficult to find a piece of writing from which the reader derives a clearer vision of individuals or groups of moving figures in their habit as they lived. That the author was endowed in the highest degree with the faculty of visualization is proved, not merely by his ability to stimulate the reader to form mental images, but even more by the fact that all the movements of individuals and groups can be followed with ease and certainty. Composition, in the larger sense of structural excellence, that quality common in French literature

1 seem
2 unpleasing
3 lasts
4 beyond (the point of) pleasure; MS. unwille
5 spoil

but all too rare in English, and supposed to be notably lacking in Piers the Plowman, is one of the most striking features.'

Our text is from Skeat's smaller edition, based on MS. Laud 581, with certain omitted lines supplied from the large edition; with the omission of the dots which mark the middle of lines; and with changes in punctuation, capitalization, and the joining of words. The lines quoted are Prol. 1–122; 3. 1–129, 133–68; 5. 304–46, 352–9, 364–71; 5. 392–478; 6. 107–53.

PROLOGUE

In a somer seson, whan soft was the sonne,
I shope [1] me in shroudes,[2] as I a shepe [3] were;
In habite as an heremite, unholy of workes,
Went wyde in þis world, wondres to here.
Ac on a May mornynge, on Malverne hulles,[4]
Me byfel a ferly [5] — of fairy, me thouȝte;
I was wery, forwandred,[6] and went me to reste
Under a brode banke, bi a bornes [7] side;
And as I lay and lened, and loked in þe wateres,
I slombred in a slepyng — it sweyved [8] so merye.
Thanne gan I to meten [9] a merveilouse swevene,
That I was in a wildernesse — wist I never where;
As I bihelde into þe est, an hiegh [10] to þe sonne,
I seigh a toure on a toft,[11] trielich [12] ymaked;
A depe dale binethe, a dongeon þereinne,
With depe dyches and derke, and dredful of sight.
A faire felde ful of folke fonde I there bytwene,
Of alle maner of men — þe mene and þe riche —
Worchyng and wandryng, as þe worlde asketh.[13]
Some putten hem [14] to þe plow, pleyed ful selde [15];
In settyng [16] and in sowyng swonken [17] ful harde,
And wonnen that [18] wastours [19] with glotonye destruyeth.

1 robed
2 rough garments
3 shepherd
4 hills; the Malvern hills are in Worcestershire, on the border of Herefordshire
5 marvel
6 worn out with wandering
7 burn's, brook's
8 rippled
9 dream
10 on high
11 hilltop
12 excellently
13 requires, demands
14 set themselves
15 seldom
16 planting
17 labored
18 gained what
19 spendthrifts

And some putten hem to pruyde — apparailed hem þereafter[1]
In contenaunce[2] of clothyng comen disgised.
In prayers and in penance putten hem manye,
Al for love of owre Lorde lyveden ful streyte,[3]
In hope for to have heveneriche[4] blisse;
As ancres[5] and heremites that holden hem in here selles,
And coveiten nought in contre to kairen aboute[6]
For no likerous liflode,[7] her lykam[8] to plese.
And somme chosen chaffare[9]; they cheven[10] the bettere —
As it semeth to owre syȝt that suche men thryveth;
And somme murthes to make, as mynstralles conneth,[11]
And geten gold with here glee — giltles, I leve.[12]
Ac japers[13] and jangelers,[14] Judas chylderen,
Feynen hem fantasies, and foles hem maketh,
And han here witte at wille, to worche, ȝif þei sholde;
That Poule precheth of hem I nel nought preve it here:
Qui turpiloquium loquitur is Luciferes hyne.[15]
Bidders[16] and beggeres fast aboute ȝede,[17]
With her belies and her bagges of bred ful ycrammed;
Fayteden[18] for here fode, fouȝten atte ale;
In glotonye, God it wote, gon hii to bedde,
And risen with ribaudye,[19] tho Roberdes knaves;
Slepe and sori sleuthe[20] seweth[21] hem evre.
Pilgrymes and palmers pliȝted hem togidere
To seke Seynt James,[22] and seyntes in Rome.
Thei went forth in here wey, with many wise tales,

1 accordingly
2 outward appearance
3 strictly
4 of the kingdom of heaven
5 anchorites
6 go about
7 dainty living
8 body
9 a merchant's life
10 achieved, prospered
11 know how to do
12 believe
13 jesters
14 jongleurs
15 servant
16 beggars
17 went
18 begged deceitful
19 ribaldry, sin
20 sloth
21 pursue
22 St. James of Co

17. *Qui . . . loquitur:* this is not from St. Paul; but it bears some resen blance to Eph. 5. 4 and Col. 3. 8.

22. Roberdes knaves: the so-called Roberts men were robbers and vag bonds (perhaps originally Robin Hood's men).

And hadden leve to lye al here lyf after.
I seigh somme that seiden þei had ysouȝt seyntes;
To eche a tale þat þei tolde here tonge was tempred to lye
More þan to sey soth, it semed bi here speche.
Heremites on an heep,[1] with hoked staves,
Wenten to Walsyngham,[2] and here wenches after;
Grete lobyes[3] and longe, that loth were to swynke,
Clotheden hem in copis,[4] to ben knowen fram othere,
And shopen[5] hem heremites, here ese to have.
I fonde þere freris — alle þe foure ordres
Preched þe peple for profit of hemselven;
Glosed[6] þe gospel as hem good lyked,[7]
For coveitise of copis construed it as þei wolde.
Many of þis maistres freris mowe clothen hem at lykyng,
For here money and marchandise marchen togideres;
For sith Charite haþ be chapman,[8] and chief to shryve lordes,
Many ferlis han fallen in a fewe ȝeris.
But[9] Holy Chirche and hii holde better togideres,
The most myschief on molde[10] is mountyng wel faste.
Þere preched a pardonere, as he a prest were;
Brouȝte forth a bulle[11] with bishopes seles,
And seide þat hymself myȝte assoilen[12] hem alle
Of falshed, of fastyng, of vowes ybroken.
Lewed men leved hym wel, and lyked his wordes;
Comen up knelyng, to kissen his bulles;
He bonched[13] hem with his brevet,[14] and blered here eyes,
And rauȝte[15] with his ragman[16] rynges and broches;
Thus þey geven here golde, glotones to kepe,

1 in great numbers
2 to the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham — a popular pilgrimage
3 lubbers
4 friars' capes or cloaks
5 made
6 glossed, commented on
7 pleased them well
8 love has become a tradesman
9 unless
10 on the earth
11 a papal bull
12 absolve
13 banged, beat
14 letter of indulgence
15 obtained
16 bull

10. four ordres: the four orders of friars were the Carmelites (white friars), Augustines (Austin friars), Dominicans (black friars), and Minorites (gray friars).

And leveth [1] such loseles [2] þat lecherye haunten.[3]
Were þe bischop yblissed,[4] and worth bothe his eres,
His seel shulde nougt be sent to deceyve þe peple;
Ac it is naugt by [5] þe bischop þat þe boy precheth,
For the parisch prest and þe pardonere parten þe silver
That þe poraille [6] of þe parisch sholde have, gif þei nere.[7]
Persones [8] and parisch prestes pleyned hem to þe bischop
Þat here parisshes were pore, sith þe pestilence-tyme,
To have a lycence and a leve at London to dwelle,
And syngen þere for symonye — for silver is swete.
Bischopes and bachelers,[9] bothe maistres and doctours,
Þat han cure [10] under Criste, and crounyng [11] in tokne
And signe þat þei sholden shryven here paroschienes,
Prechen and prey for hem, and þe pore fede,
Liggen in London — in Lenten, an elles.[12]
Somme serven þe kyng, and his silver tellen [13];
In Cheker [14] and in Chancerye chalengen [15] his dettes
Of wardes [16] and wardmotes,[17] weyves and streyves.[18]
And some serven as servantz lordes and ladyes,
And in stede of stuwardes sytten and demen.[19]
Here messe and here matynes, and many of here oures,[20]
Arn don undevoutlych; drede is at þe laste
Lest Crist in consistorie [21] acorse ful manye.
I parceyved of þe power þat Peter had to kepe,
To bynde and to unbynde, as þe boke telleth,[22]
How he it left wiþ love, as owre Lorde hight,[23]
Amonges foure vertues — þe best of all vertues,
Þat cardinales ben called, and closyng gatis [24] —

1 believe
2 wretches (vagabonds)
3 practise
4 a holy (blessed) man
5 concerning
6 poor people
7 if it were not for them
8 parsons
9 young men
10 a charge
11 the tonsure
12 and at other times
13 count
14 the court of the Exchequer
15 claim
16 wardships
17 ward-courts
18 waifs and strays — abandoned property or that for which there were no heirs
19 judge
20 canonical hours
21 court, tribunal; here, Judgment
22 Matt. 16. 19
23 bade
24 with power to close g because 'cardinal' i rived from *card* hinge

Þere Crist is in kyngdome to close and to shutte,
And to opne it to hem, and hevene blisse shewe.
Ac of þe cardinales atte courte[1] þat cauȝt of[2] þat name,
And power presumed in hem a Pope to make,
To han þat power þat Peter hadde, inpugnen I nelle,[3]
For in love and letterure[4] þe eleccioun bilongeth;
Forþi I can and can nauȝte[5] of courte speke more.
  Þanne come þere a kyng — knyȝthod hym ladde;
Miȝt of þe comunes made hym to regne;
And þanne cam Kynde Wytte,[6] and clerkes he made,
For to conseille þe kyng, and þe comune save.
The kyng and knyȝthode, and clergye bothe,
Casten[7] þat þe comune shulde hemself fynde.[8]
Þe comune contreved[9] of Kynde Witte craftes,
And for profit of alle þe poeple, plowmen ordeygned,
To tilie[10] and travaile, as Trewe Lyf askeþ.
Þe kynge and þe comune, and Kynde Witte þe thridde,
Shope[11] lawe and lewte — eche man to knowe his owne.

MEED THE MAIDEN

  Now is Mede[12] þe mayde, and na mo of hem alle,
With bedellus[13] and wiþ bayllyves brouȝt bifor þe kyng.
The kyng called a clerke — can I nouȝt his name —
To take Mede þe mayde, and make hire at ese.
'I shal assaye hir myself, and sothelich appose[14]
What man of þis molde þat hire were leveste[15];
And if she worche bi my witte, and my wille folwe,
I wil forgyve hir þis gilte, so me God help!'
Curteysliche þe clerke þanne, as þe kyng hight,

1 at the court of Rome
2 received
3 I will not raise question
4 learning
5 can because of what he knows, but cannot because of his reverence
6 common sense
7 contrived
8 provide food for themselves
9 devised
10 till, cultivate
11 created
12 bribery, 'graft'
13 beadles, summoners
14 inquire
15 dearest

Toke Mede bi þe middel,[1] and brouȝte hir into chaumbre,
And þere was myrthe and mynstralcye, Mede to plese.
They þat wonyeth in Westmynstre worschiped hir alle,
Gentelliche, wiþ joye; þe justices somme[2]
Busked[3] hem to þe boure[4] þere þe birde[5] dwelled,
To conforte hire kyndely, by clergise[6] leve,
And seiden: 'Mourne nought, Mede, ne make þow no sorwe,
For we wil wisse[7] þe kynge, and þi wey shape
To be wedded at þi wille, and where þe leve liketh,[8]
For al Conscience caste[9] or craft, as I trowe!'
Mildeliche Mede þanne mercyed[10] hem alle
Of þeire gret goodnesse, and gaf hem uchone
Coupes[11] of clene golde, and coppis[12] of silver,
Rynges with rubies, and ricchesses manye;
The leste man of here meyne[13] a motoun[14] of golde.
Thanne lauȝte[15] þei leve, þis lordes, at[16] Mede.
With that comen clerkis to conforte hir þe same,
And beden hire be blithe—'for we beth þine owne,
For to worche þi wille þe while þow myȝte laste.'
Hendeliche[17] heo þanne bihight[18] hem þe same,
To 'love ȝow lelli,[19] and lordes to make,
And in þe consistorie atte courte do calle[20] ȝowre names;
Shal no lewdnesse lette[21] þe leode[22] þat I lovye,
That he ne worth first avanced—for I am biknowen[23]—
Þere konnyng[24] clerkes shul clokke[25] bihynde.'
Þanne come þere a confessoure, coped as a frere;
To Mede þe mayde he mellud[26] þis wordes,
And seide ful softly—in shrifte[27] as it were:

1 waist
2 some of them
3 hastened
4 bower, lady's chamber
5 lady
6 learning's
7 guide
8 you please
9 conscience's contrivance
10 thanked
11 bowls
12 cups
13 household
14 a French gold coin worth about five shillings, stamped with the impression of the Lamb of God
15 took
16 of
17 courteously
18 promised
19 loyally
20 cause to be called
21 ignorance hinder
22 man
23 well-known
24 wise, learned
25 limp, hobble
26 spoke
27 confession

'Þeiȝ lewed men and lered[1] men had leyne by þe bothe,
And Falsenesse haved yfolwed þe al þis fyfty wyntre,
I shal assoille þe myselve for a seme[2] of whete,
And also be þi bedeman,[3] and bere wel þi message
Amonges kniȝtes and clerkis, Conscience to torne.[4]'
Thanne Mede for here mysdedes to þat man kneled,
And shrove hire of hire shrewednesse[5] — shamelees, I trowe;
Tolde hym a tale, and toke[6] hym a noble,[7]
For to ben hire bedeman, and hire brokour als.[8]
Thanne he assoilled hir sone; and sithen he seyde:
'We han a wyndowe a wirchyng[9] wil sitten us ful heigh[10];
Woldestow glase[11] þat gable, and grave þereinne þi name,
Siker[12] sholde þi soule be hevene to have.'
'Wist I that,' quod þat womman, 'I wolde nouȝt spare
For to be ȝowre frende, frere, and faille ȝow nevre,
Whil ȝe love lordes þat lechery haunteth,
And lakketh nouȝt ladis þat loveth wel the same.
It is frelete of flesh — ȝe fynde it in bokes —
And a course of kynde[13] wherof we komen alle;
Who may scape þe sklaundre,[14] þe skathe[15] is sone amended;
It is synne of þe sevene sonnest[16] relessed.[17]
Have mercy,' quod Mede, 'of men þat it haunte,
And I shal kevre[18] ȝowre kirke, ȝowre cloystre do maken,
Wowes[19] do whiten, and wyndowes glasen,
Do peynten and purtraye, and paye for þe makynge,
That evry segge[20] shal seyn I am sustre of ȝowre hous.'
Ac God to alle good folke suche gravynge defendeth,[21]
To writen in wyndowes of here wel[22] dedes,

1 learned
2 load
3 beadsman
4 defeat
5 sin
6 gave
7 a third of a pound sterling
8 broker also
9 in process of being made
10 cost us full dear
11 provide the glass for
12 certain
13 nature
14 disgrace
15 harm
16 soonest
17 forgiven
18 cover
19 walls
20 person
21 forbids
22 good

26. sustre: any wealthy person could belong to a religious order of friars through a 'letter of fraternity.'

On aventure[1] pruyde be peynted þere, and pompe of þe worlde;
For Crist knoweþ þi conscience and þi kynde wille,[2]
And þi coste,[3] and þi coveitise, and who þe catel ouȝte.[4]
Forþi I lere[5] ȝow, lordes, leveþ suche werkes —
To writen in wyndowes of ȝowre wel dedes,
Or to greden[6] after Goddis men whan ȝe delen doles;
An aventure ȝe han ȝowre hire here,[7] and ȝoure hevene als;
Nesciat sinistra quid faciat dextra:[8]
Lat nouȝte þi left half, late ne rathe,[9]
Wyte what þow worchest with þi riȝt syde;
For þus, bit[10] þe gospel, gode men do here almesse.
Meires[11] and maceres,[12] that menes[13] ben bitwene
Þe kynge and þe comune to kepe þe lawes,
To punyschen on pillories and pynynge-stoles[14]
Brewesteres[15] and bakesteres,[16] bocheres and cokes;
For þise aren men on þis molde þat moste harme worcheth
To þe pore peple þat parcelmele[17] buggen,[18]
For they poysoun þe peple priveliche[19] and oft;
Thei rychen[20] þorw regraterye,[21] and rentes hem buggen
With þat þe pore people shulde put in here wombe[22];
For toke þei on[23] trewly, þei tymbred nouȝt[24] so heiȝe,
Ne bouȝte non burgages,[25] be ȝe ful certeyne.
Ac Mede þe mayde þe maire hath bisouȝte,
Of alle suche sellers sylver to take,
Or presentz withoute pens, as peces of silver,
Ringes, or other ricchesse, þe regrateres to maynetene:
'For my love,' quod that lady, 'love hem uch one,
And soffre hem to selle somdele[26] aȝeins resoun.'

[1] lest perchance
[2] natural disposition
[3] expenses
[4] who really owned the property
[5] teach
[6] cry after, send for
[7] Matt. 6. 2
[8] Matt. 6. 3
[9] early
[11] mayors, magistrates
[12] mace-bearers (officers of the courts)
[13] intermediaries
[14] stools of punishment
[15] brewers
[16] bakers
[17] in small quantities
[18] buy
[20] grow rich
[21] selling retail
[22] stomach
[23] if they took in money
[24] would not build
[25] town-dwellings
[26] somewhat

Salamon þe sage a sarmoun he made,
For to amende maires, and men þat kepen lawes,
And tolde hem þis teme,[1] þat I telle thynke:
Ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum qui libenter accipiunt munera, etc.
Amonge þis lettered ledes,[3] þis Latyn is to mene
That fyre shal falle, and brenne al to blo askes[4]
The houses and þe homes of hem þat desireth
Ȝiftes or ȝeres-ȝyves[5] bicause of here offices.
The kynge fro conseille cam, and called after Mede,
And ofsent[6] hir alswythe[7] with serjauntes manye,
That brouȝten hir to bowre with blisse and with joye.
Curteisliche þe kynge þanne comsed[8] to telle —
To Mede þe mayde melleth[9] þise wordes:
'Unwittily, womman, wrouȝte hastow oft,
Ac worse wrouȝtestow nevre þan þo[10] þow Fals toke[11];
But I forgyve þe þat gilte, and graunte þe my grace;
Hennes to þi deth-day do so na more.
I have a knyȝte, Conscience, cam late fro biȝunde[12];
Ȝif he wilneth þe to wyf, wyltow hym have?'
'Ȝe, lorde,' quod þat lady, 'Lorde forbede elles!
But[13] I be holely at ȝowre heste, lat hange[14] me sone!'
And þanne was Conscience calde to come and appiere
Bifor þe kynge and his conseille, as clerkes and othere.
Knelynge, Conscience to þe kynge louted,[15]
To wite what his wille were, and what he do shulde.
'Woltow wedde þis womman,' quod þe kynge, 'ȝif I wil assente —
For she is fayne of þi felawship — for to be þi make[16]?'
Quod Conscience to þe kynge: 'Cryst it me forbede!
Ar[17] I wedde suche a wyf, wo me bityde!
For she is frele[18] of hir feith, fykel of here speche,

1 text, theme
2 Job 15. 34
3 persons
4 livid ashes
5 New Year's gifts (extorted as bribes)
6 sent after
7 as quickly as possible
8 began
9 speaks
10 when
11 took to thee Falsehood
12 across the sea
13 except
14 have me hange
15 made obeisance
16 mate
17 before
18 frail

And maketh men mysdo many score tymes;
Truste of hire tresore treieth[1] ful manye.
Wyves and widewes wantounes she techeth,[2]
And lereth[3] hem leccherye that loveth hire ȝiftes.
Ȝowre fadre she felled þorw fals biheste,
And hath apoysounde Popis,[4] and peired[5] Holi Cherche.
Is nauȝt a better baúde, bi hym þat me made,
Bitwene hevene and helle — in erthe though men souȝte. . . .
Sisoures[6] and sompnoures[7] — suche men hir preiseth;
Shireves of shires were shent ȝif she nere,[8]
For she doþ men lese here londe and here lyf bothe.
She leteth passe prisoneres, and payeth for hem ofte,
And gyveth þe gailers golde and grotes[9] togideres,
To unfettre þe fals — fle where hym lyketh!
And takeþ þe trewe bi þe toppe,[10] *and tieth hym faste,*
And hangeth hym for hatred þat harme dede nevre.
To be cursed in consistorie she counteth nouȝte a russhe;
For she copeth[11] þe comissarie, and coteth[12] his clerkis;
She is assoilled[13] as sone as hirself liketh,
And may neiȝe as moche do in a moneth one[14]
As ȝowre secret seel in syx score dayes.
For she is prive[15] with þe Pope — provisoures[16] it knoweth —
For Sire Symonye and hirselve seleth[17] hire bulles.
She blesseth þise bisshopes, þeiȝe þey be lewed,
Provendreth persones,[18] and prestes meynteneth
To have lemmannes and lotebies[19] alle here lifdayes,
And bringen forth barnes aȝein forbode[20] lawes.
There she is wel with þe kynge wo is þe rewme,

[1] betrays
[2] teaches to be
[3] teaches
[4] poisoned Popes
[5] injured
[6] jurymen
[7] summoners
[8] would be lost if it were not *for her*
[9] groats
[10] top, head
[11] provides a cope for
[12] provides coats for
[13] absolved
[14] by herself
[15] intimate
[16] provisors (persons named by the Pope for a living not vacant)
[17] seal
[18] supports parsons
[19] concubines
[20] prohibitive

5. Ȝowre fadre: probably Edward II, *father of* Edward III (king at the time the first version was written).

For she is favorable to Fals,[1] and fouleth Trewthe ofte.
Bi Jesus, with here jeweles ȝowre justices she shendeth,[2]
And lith[3] agein þe lawe, and letteth hym þe gate[4]
That Feith may nouȝte have his forth,[5] here[6] florcines go so þikke.
She ledeth þe lawe as hire list, and love-dayes[7] maketh,
And doth men lese þorw hire love þat lawe myȝte wynne —
Þe mase[8] for a mene man, þouȝ he mote[9] evre.[10]
Lawe is so lordeliche, and loth to make ende,
Withoute presentz or pens she pleseth wel fewe.
Barounes and burgeys she bryngeth in sorwe,
And alle þe comune in kare þat coveyten lyve[11] in trewthe,
For Clergye[12] and Coveitise[13] she coupleth togideres.
Þis is þe lyf of that lady — now Lorde ȝif hir sorwe,
And alle that meynteneth here men, meschaunce hem bityde!
For pore men mowe have no powere to pleyne[14] hem, þouȝ þei smerte,
Suche a maistre is Mede amonge men of gode.'

GLUTTONY

Now bigynneth Gloutoun[15] for to go to schrifte,
And kaires hym[16] to kirkeward,[17] his coupe[18] to schewe;
Ac Beton þe brewestere bad hym good morwe,
And axed of hym with þat whiderward he wolde.
'To Holi Cherche,' quod he, 'for to here masse,
And sithen[19] I wil be shryven, and synne na more.'
'I have gode ale, gossib,' quod she; 'Glotown, wiltow as
Hastow auȝte in þi purs[20]? — any hote spices?'
'I have peper and piones,[21]' quod she, 'and a pound
A ferthyngworth of fenel-seed for fastyng-dayes.'

1 MS. the fals
2 destroys
3 lies
4 hinders him the way
5 egress
6 her
7 days for holding court, and settling differences
8 disappointment
9 plead, argue
10 MS. hir evre
11 desire to live
12 Learning
13 Avarice
14 make complaint
15 Glutton
16 repai
17 to ch
18 gu
19 a
20
21

Þanne goth Glotoun in, and grete othes after;
Cesse[1] þe souteresse[2] sat on þe benche,
Watte þe warner[3] and hys wyf bothe,
Tymme þe tynkere, and tweyne of his prentis,[4]
Hikke þe hakeneyman,[5] and Hughe þe nedeler,[6]
Clarice of Cokkeslane,[7] and þe clerke of þe cherche,
Dawe þe dykere,[8] and a dozeine other;
Sire Piers of Pridie, and Peronelle[9] of Flaundres,
A ribibour,[10] a ratonere,[11] a rakyer of Chepe,[12]
A ropere,[13] a redyngkyng,[14] and Rose þe dissheres,[15]
Godfrey of Garlekehithe,[16] and Gryfin þe Walshe,[17]
And upholderes[18] an hepe erly bi þe morwe
Geven Glotoun with glad chere good ale to hansel.[19]
Clement þe cobelere cast of[20] his cloke,

For to trye þis chaffare bitwixen hem þre.
Hikke þe hostellere[1] hadde þe cloke,
In covenaunte þat Clement shulde þe cuppe fille,
And have Hikkes hode hostellere,[2] and holde hym yserved[3];
And whoso repented rathest[4] shulde arise after,
And grete Sire Glotoun with a galoun ale.
Þere was laughyng and louryng,[5] and 'Let go þe cuppe!'
And seten so til evensonge, and songen umwhile,[6]
Tyl Glotoun had yglobbed[7] a galoun an a jille.[8] . . .
He myȝte neither steppe ne stonde er he his staffe hadde;
And þanne gan he go liche a glewmannes bicche,[9]
Somme tyme aside, and somme tyme arrere,[10]
As whoso leyth lynes for to lacche foules.[11]
And whan he drowgh to þe dore, þanne dymmed his eighen;
He stumbled on þe thresshewolde, an threwe[12] to þe erthe.
Clement þe cobelere cauȝte hym bi þe myddel,
For to lifte hym alofte, and leyde him on his knowes.[13] . . .
With al þe wo of þis worlde, his wyf and his wenche
Baren hym home to his bedde, and brouȝte hym þerinne;
And after al þis excesse, he had an accidie,[14]
Þat he slepe Saterday and Sonday til sonne ȝede[15] to reste.
Þanne waked he of his wynkyng,[16] and wiped his eyghen;
Þe fyrste worde þat he warpe[17] was: 'Where is þe bolle[18]?'
His wif gan edwite[19] hym þo how wikkedlich he lyved,
And Repentance riȝte so rebuked hym þat tyme.

[1] an innkeeper (who also let horses for hire; cf. 346 5, 16)
[2] the hood of Hikke the innkeeper
[3] contented
[4] soonest
[5] scowling
[6] at intervals
[7] gulped down
[8] gill
[9] a (blind) minstrel's dog
[10] backwards
[11] catch birds
[12] fell
[13] knees
[14] fit of sloth
[15] went
[16] slumber
[17] uttered
[18] cup, bowl
[19] reproach

SLOTH THE PARSON

Þanne come Sleuthe [1] al bislabered,[2] with two slymy eiȝen,
'I most sitte,' seyde þe segge,[3] 'or elles shulde I nappe;
I may nouȝte stonde ne stoupe, ne withoute a stole [4] knele.
Were I brouȝte abedde, . . .
Sholde no ryngynge do me ryse ar I were rype to dyne.'
He bygan 'Benedicite' with a bolke,[5] and his brest knocked,
And roxed [6] and rored, and rutte [7] atte laste.
'What! awake, renke [8]!' quod Repentance, 'and rape [9] þe to shrifte.'
'If I shulde deye bi [10] þis day, me liste [11] nouȝte to loke;
I can nouȝte perfitly my Pater Noster, as þe prest it syngeth,
But I can rymes of Robyn Hood, and Randolf Erle of Chestre,[12]
Ac neither of owre Lorde ne of owre Lady, þe leste þat evere was made.
I have made vowes fourty, and forȝete hem on þe morne;
I parfourned [13] nevere penaunce, as þe prest me hiȝte,
Ne ryȝte sori for my synnes ȝet was I nevere;
And ȝif I bidde any bedes,[14] but-if it be in wrath,
Þat I telle with my tonge is two myle fro myne herte.
I am occupied eche day — haliday and other —
With ydel tales atte ale, and otherwhile in cherches;
Goddes peyne and his passioun — ful selde þynke I þereon.
I visited nevere fieble men, ne fettered folke in puttes [15];
I have levere here an harlotrie,[16] or a somer-game of souteres,[17]
Or lesynges [18] to laughe at, and belye my neighbore,
Þan al þat evere Marke made, Mathew, John, and Lucas;
And vigilies and fastyng-dayes — alle þise late I passe,[19]
And ligge abedde in Lenten, an[d] my lemman in myn armes,
Tyl matynes and masse be do, and þanne go to þe freres;

1 sloth
2 bedabbled
3 creature
4 stool
5 belch
6 stretched himself
7 snored
8 man
9 hasten
10 within
11 would please
12 1181–1231
13 performed
14 offer any petitions
15 dungeons
16 a tale of harlotry
17 summer-game played by shoemakers, consisting of athletic sports, etc.
18 lying tales
19 I let pass, pay no heed to

11. **Robyn Hood**: *the earliest mention of him.*

Come I to 'Ite, missa est,'[1] I holde me yserved.[2]
I nam nouȝte shryven some tyme — but-if sekenesse it make[3] —
Nouȝt tweies in two ȝere, and þanne up gesse[4] I schryve me.
I have be[5] prest and persoun passynge thretti wynter,
Ȝete can I neither solfe[6] ne synge, ne seyntes lyves rede;
But I can fynde in a felde or in a fourlonge[7] an hare,
Better þan in *Beatus vir*[8] or in *Beati omnes*[9]
Construe oon clause wel, and kenne[10] it to my parochienes.
I can holde love-dayes, and here a reves rekenynge,
Ac in canoun[11] ne in þe decretales[12] I can nouȝte rede a lyne.
Ȝif I bigge[13] and borwe[14] it — but-ȝif it be ytailled[15] —
I forȝete it as ȝerne[16]; and ȝif men me it axe
Sixe sithes or sevene, I forsake[17] it with othes,
And þus tene[18] I trewe men ten hundreth tymes.
And my servauntz — some tyme her salarye is bihynde;
Reuthe[19] is to here þe rekenynge whan we shal rede acomptes;
So with wikked wille and wraththe my werkmen I paye.
Ȝif any man doth me a benfait, or helpeth me at nede,
I am unkynde aȝein[20] his curteisye, and can nouȝte understonde it;
For I have and have hadde somedele[21] haukes maneres:
I nam nouȝte lured with love, but þere ligge[22] auȝte[23] under þe thombe.
The kyndenesse þat myne evene-Cristene[24] kidde me fernyere,[25]
Sixty sythes I, Sleuthe, have forȝete it sith;
In speche and in sparynge of speche yspilte[26] many a tyme
Bothe flesche and fissche, and many other vitailles,
Bothe bred and ale, butter, melke, and chese —
Forsleuthed[27] in my servyse, til it myȝte serve no man.
I ran aboute in ȝouthe, and ȝaf me nouȝte to lerne,
And evere sith have be beggere, for my foule sleuthe;

1 the closing words of the mass
2 satisfied
3 unless sickness bring it about
4 by guesswork
5 been
6 sol-fa, i.e. sing by note
7 lot (of land)
8 Ps. 1 or 112
9 Ps. 128
10 explain
11 canon law
12 decretals — a collection of Popes' edicts
13 buy anything
14 give a pledge for it
15 marked on a tally
16 quickly (as may be)
17 deny
18 injure
19 pity
20 in response to
21 to some extent
22 lie
23 The lure was often baited with meat
24 fellow-Christian
25 showed me formerly
26 wasted
27 wasted by carelessness

Heu michi, quod sterilem vitam duxi juvenilem!'
'Repentestow þe nauȝte?' quod Repentance, and riȝte with swowned,
Til *Vigilate*,[1] þe veille,[2] fette[3] water at his eyȝen,
And flatte[4] it on his face, and faste on hym criede,
And seide: 'Ware þe fram Wanhope,[5] wolde[6] þe bitraye!
"I am sori for my synnes"—sey so to þiselve,
And bete þiselve on þe breste, and bidde hym[7] of grace;
For is no gult[8] here so grete þat his goodnesse nys more.'
  Þanne sat Sleuthe up, and seyned[9] hym swithe,[10]
And made avowe tofore[11] God for his foule sleuthe:
'Shal no Sondaye be þis sevene ȝere—but sykenesse it lette[12]
Þat I ne shal do[13] me er day to þe dere cherche,
And heren matines and masse, as I a monke were;
Shal none ale[14] after mete holde me þennes
Tyl I have evensonge herde, I behote to þe rode.[15]
And ȝete wil I ȝelde aȝein[16]—if I so moche have—
Al þat I wikkedly wan sithen I wytte hadde.
And þough my liflode lakke,[17] leten I nelle[18]
Þat eche man ne shal have his, ar I hennes wende;
And with þe residue and þe remenaunt, bi þe Rode of Chestre!
I shal seke treuthe arst,[19] ar I se Rome!'

PIERS THE PLOWMAN

  Now is Perkyn[20] and his pilgrymes to þe plowe faren[21];
To erie[22] þis halve-acre holpyn hym manye.
Dikeres and delveres digged up þe balkes[23];
Þerewith was Perkyn apayed,[24] and preysed hem faste.
Other werkemen þere were þat wrouȝten ful ȝerne,[25]

[1] Cf. Mk. 13. 37
[2] watcher
[3] fetched
[4] dashed
[5] despair
[6] who would
[7] God
[8] guilt, sin
[9] signed (crossed)
[10] quickly
[11] before
[12] prevent
[13] betake
[14] alehouse
[15] vow to the cross
[16] repay
[17] means of living fail
[18] cease I will not
[19] first
[20] little Piers (Peterki
[21] gone
[22] plow
[23] ridges of land left ur
[24] pleased
[25] zealously

Eche man in his manere made hymself to done,
And some, to plese Perkyn, piked up þe wedes.
At heighe pryme[1] Peres lete þe plowe stonde,
To oversen hem hymself; and whoso best wrouȝte,
He shulde be huyred þerafter, whan hervest-tyme come.
  And þanne seten somme, and songen atte nale,[2]
And hulpen erie his half acre with 'How! trolli-lolli!'
'Now, bi þe peril of my soule!' quod Pieres al in pure tene[3]:
'But ȝe arise þe rather,[4] and rape[5] ȝow to worche,
Shal no greyne þat groweth glade ȝow at nede;
And þough ȝe deye for dole, þe devel have þat reccheth[6]!'
  Tho were faitoures[7] aferde, and feyned hem blynde,
Somme leyde here legges aliri,[8] as suche loseles conneth,[9]
And made her mone to Pieres, and preyde hym of grace:
'For we have no lymes to laboure with, lorde, ygraced be ȝe!
Ac we preye for ȝow, Pieres, and for ȝowre plow bothe,
Þat God of his grace ȝowre grayne multiplye,
And ȝelde ȝow of[10] ȝowre almesse þat ȝe ȝive us here;
For we may nouȝte swynke ne swete, suche sikenesse us eyleth.'
'If it be soth,' quod Pieres, 'þat ȝe seyne, I shal it sone asspye!
Ȝe ben wastoures,[11] I wote wel, and Treuthe wote þe sothe!
And I am his olde hyne,[12] and hiȝte hym to warne
Which þei were in þis worlde his werkemen appeyred.[13]
Ȝe wasten þat men wynnen with travaille and with tene,
c Treuthe shal teche ȝow his teme to dryve,
r ȝe shal ete barly bred, and of þe broke drynke;
it if he be blynde or broke-legged, or bolted with yrnes,[14]
e shal ete whete bred, and drynke with myselve,
l God of his goodnesse amendement hym sende.
ȝe myȝte travaille as Treuthe wolde, and take mete and huyre
kepe kyne[15] in þe felde, þe corne fro þe bestes,

bably about 9 A.M.
eir ale
ion, grief
quickly

im who cares
7 vagabonds
8 crosswise
9 wretched idlers know how to do
10 requite you for
11 spendthrifts
12 servant
13 those who in this world demoralized his workmen
14 supported with iron supports
15 cattle

Diken or delven, or dyngen[1] uppon sheves,[2]
Or helpe make morter, or bere mukke afelde.
In lecherye and in losengerye[3] ȝe lyven, and in sleuthe —
And al is þorw suffrance þat venjaunce ȝow ne taketh.
Ac ancres and heremytes, þat eten noȝt but at nones,[4]
And na more er morwe,[5] myne almesse shul þei have,
And of my catel[6] to cope hem with þat han cloistres and cherches.
Ac Robert Renneaboute shal nowȝte have of myne,
Ne posteles,[7] but[8] þey preche conne, and have powere[9] of þe bisschop;
They shal have payne[10] and potage, and make hemself at ese,
For it is an unresonable religioun þat hath riȝte nouȝte of certeyne.[11]'

PIERS THE PLOWMAN'S CREED

Among the poems which owe their origin to *Piers Plowman* is *Piers the Plowman's Creed*, written by an unknown author soon after 1393. It runs thus: An unlearned man who has got by heart the Paternoster and Ave Maria, wishes also to know the Creed, and seeks a teacher. He applies in turn to friars of each of the four orders. Each rails at the other orders, and promises that the questioner shall be saved without knowledge of the Creed, if he contribute to the expenses of the monastery. The man leaves them with indignation at their magnificent buildings and luxurious lives, and finally comes upon a poor plowman, who joins him in invective against friars of all orders. Skeat suggests that the keynote of the poem is to be found at the beginning of Passus 9 (A), 8 (B), 11 (C) of *Piers Plowman*.

This poem was first printed in 1553. Our text, however, is taken, not from that of 1553, but from Skeat's edition (E.E.T.S. 30) of MS. Camb. Trin. Coll. R. 3. 15 (adopting Skeat's emendations without comment), which, though later than 1553, he concludes to be based on a much earlier manuscript. Our selections embrace lines 98–137, 153–242, 420–42, 546–64, 719–61, and 775–8.

'Alas! frere,' quaþ I þo,[12] 'my purpos is ifailed;
Now is my counfort acast.[13] Canstou no bote[14] —
Where Y myȝte meten wiþ a man þat myȝte me wissen[15]
For to conne my crede, Crist for to folwen?'

[1] thresh
[2] sheaves
[3] lying, flattering
[4] noon
[5] till the next morning
[6] substance
[7] apostles
[8] unless
[9] license
[10] bread, food
[11] has no established order
[12] then
[13] cast away, lost
[14] do you know no remedy
[15] teach

'Certeyne, felawe,' quaþ þe frere, 'wiþouten any faile
Of all men opon mold, we Menures[1] most scheweþ
Þe pure apostelles life, wiþ penaunce on erþe,
And suen[2] hem in sanctite, and suffren well harde.
We haunten none tavernes, ne hobelen[3] abouten;
At marketts and myracles[4] we medleþ us nevere;
We hondlen no money, but menelich[5] faren,
And haven hunger at the meate — at ich a mel ones.
We haven forsaken the worlde, and in wo lybbeþ,[6]
In penaunce and poverte; and precheþ þe puple,
By ensample of oure life, soules to helpen;
And in povertie praien for all oure parteners[7]
Þat ȝyveþ us any good, God to honouren —
Oþer bell, oþer booke, or breed to our fode,
Other catell,[8] oþer cloth to coveren wiþ our bones,[9]
Money, or money-worthe — here mede[10] is in heven.
For we buldeþ a burwȝ,[11] a brod and a large:
A chirche and a chapaile, with chambres alofte,
Wiþ wide windowes ywrouȝt, and walles wel heye,
Þat mote bene portreid and paynt, and pulched[12] ful clene;
With gaie glittering glas, glowing as þe sonne;
And, myȝtestou amenden us wiþ money of þyn owne,
Þou chuldest cnely[13] bifore Crist in compas[14] of gold,
In þe wide windowe westwarde — wel niȝe in the myddell —
And Seynt Fraunces himself schall folden the in his cope,
And presente the to the Trynitie, and praie for thy synnes;
Þi name schall noblich ben wryten and wrouȝt, for the nones,[15]
And, in remembrance of þe, yrade[16] þer for ever.
And, broþer, be þou nouȝt aferd; bythenk in thyn herte;
Þouȝ þou conne nouȝt þi crede, kare þou no more;

rites
w
le-plays
y

7 those who share with us
8 property, goods
9 our bones with
10 their reward
11 large convent (*lit.* borough)
12 polished

13 kneel
14 circle, ring; with this whole passage compare *Piers Plowman*, 341 23-26
15 for the occasion
16 read

I schal asoilen[1] þe, syre, and setten it on my soule,
And þou maie maken þis good; þenk þou non oþer.[2]'
'Sire,' Y saide, 'in certaine Y schal gon and asaye.'
And he sette on me his honde, and asoilede me clene;
And þeir Y parted him fro, wiþouten any peine;
In covenant þat Y come aȝen, Crist he me betauȝte.[3] . . .
Þanne þouȝt Y to frayne[4] þe first[5] of þis foure ordirs,
And presede[6] to þe prechoures to proven[7] here wille.
Ich hiȝede[8] to her house to herken of more,
And whan Y cam to þat court, Y gaped aboute.
Swich a bild[9] bold, ybuld opon erþe heiȝte,[10]
Say[11] I nouȝt in certeine siþþe a longe tyme.
Y ȝemede[12] upon þat house, and ȝerne[13] þeron loked,
Whouȝ[14] þe pileres weren ypeynt and pulched ful clene,
And queynteli icorven wiþ curiouse knottes,[15]
Wiþ wyndowes well ywrouȝt, wide up olofte.
And þanne Y entrid in and evenforþ[16] went,
And all was walled þat wone,[17] þouȝ it wid were,
Wiþ posternes in pryvytie[18] to pasen[19] when hem liste,
Orcheȝardes and erberes[20] evesed[21] well clene,
And a curious cros craftly entayled,[22]
Wiþ tabernacles[23] ytiȝt[24] to toten[25] all abouten.
Þe pris[26] of a plouȝlond, of[27] penyes so rounde,
To aparaile[28] þat pyler were pure[29] lytel.
Þanne Y munte[30] me forþ þe mynstre to knowen,
And awaytede a woon[31] wonderlie well ybeld,[32]

[1] absolve
[2] no otherwise
[3] he commended me to Christ
[4] question
[5] the Dominicans
[6] pressed forward, hastened
[7] make trial of
[8] hied me
[9] building
[10] a height of earth, an elevation
[11] saw
[12] gazed attentively
[13] eagerly
[14] how
[15] bosses
[16] straight ahead
[17] dwelling-place
[18] private posterns
[19] go out
[20] gardens
[21] bordered
[22] carved
[23] cells
[24] fixed, arranged
[25] spy
[26] price
[27] in
[28] furnish forth, provide for
[29] very
[30] ventured
[31] perceived a building
[32] built

8. prechoures: the Dominicans were called Preachers.

Wiþ arches on everiche half,[1] and belliche[2] ycorven,
Wiþ crochetes[3] on corners wiþ knottes of golde,
Wyde wyndowes ywrougt, ywriten full þikke,[4]
Schynen wiþ schapen scheldes[5] to schewen aboute,
Wiþ merkes[6] of marchauntes ymedled[7] bytwene,
Mo þan twenty and two twyes ynoumbred.
Þer is none heraud[8] þat haþ half swich a rolle—
Rigt as a rageman[9] hadde[10] rekned hem newe.
Tombes opon tabernacles tyld opon lofte,[11]
Housed in hirnes[12] harde set abouten,
Of armede alabaustre clad for þe nones,
Made upon marbel in many maner wyse;
Knyghtes in her conisantes[13] clad for þe nones;
All it semed seyntes, ysacred[14] opon erþe,
And lovely ladies ywrougt leyen by her sydes,
In many gay garmentes, þat weren goldbeten.[15]
Þouȝ þe tax of ten ȝer were trewly ygadered,
Nolde it nouȝt maken þat hous half, as Y trowe.
Þanne kam I to þat cloister and gaped abouten,
Whouȝ it was pilered and peynt and portred well clene
All yhyled wiþ leed[16] lowe to þe stones,
And ypaved wiþ peynt til[17] iche poynte[18] after oþer;
Wiþ kundites[19] of clene tyn[20] closed all aboute,
Wiþ lavoures[21] of latun[22] lovelyche ygreithed.[23]
I trowe þe gaynage[24] of þe ground in a gret schire
Nolde aparaile þat place oo poynt til other ende.[25]
Þanne was þe chaptire-hous wrouȝt as a greet chirche,
Corven and covered, and queyntliche entayled,[26]

e
autifully
ckets
h many inscriptions
ats of arms wrought
nbols, badges
erspersed
rald
talogue
S. haþ
11 set up on high
12 enclosed in corners
13 cognizances
14 sanctified, consecrated
15 adorned with beaten gold
16 covered with lead
17 painted tiles
18 piece, bit
19 conduits
20 tin
21 lavers
22 latoun, a kind of b
23 prepared
24 produce
25 would not fit out t one bit towards t end
26 sculptured

Wiþ semlich selure[1] yset on lofte,
As a Parlement Hous ypeynted aboute.
Þanne ferd[2] Y into fraytour,[3] and fond þere anoþer,
An halle for an heyȝ kinge an housholde to holden,
Wiþ brode bordes[4] aboute ybenched[5] wel clene,
Wiþ windowes of glas wrouȝt as a chirche.
• Þanne walkede Y ferrer, and went all abouten,
And seiȝ halles ful hyȝe, and houses full noble,
Chambers wiþ chymneyes, and chapells gaie,
And kychens for an hyȝe kinge in castells to holden,
And her dortour[6] ydiȝte[7] wiþ dores ful stronge,
Fermery[8] and fraitur, with fele mo houses,
And a[9] strong ston wall, sterne opon heiþe,[10]
Wiþ gaie garites[11] and grete, and iche hole yglased,
And oþere houses ynowe to herberwe þe queene;
And ȝet þise bilderes wilne beggen a baggful of wheate
Of a pure pore[12] man þat maie oneþe[13] paie
Half his rente in a ȝer, and half ben behynde.
Þanne turned Y aȝen, whan Y hadde all ytoted,[14]
And fond in a freitour a frere on a benche,
A greet cherl and a grym, growen as a tonne,[15]
Wiþ a face as fat as a full bledder
Blowen bretfull[16] of breþ, and as a bagge honged[17]
On boþen his chekes, and his chyn wiþ a chol[18] lollede,[19]
As greet as a gos-eye,[20] growen all of grece;
Þat[21] all wagged his fleche[22] as a quyk myre.[23]
His cope þat biclypped[24] him, wel clene[25] was it folden,
Of double worstede[26] ydyȝt,[27] doun to þe hele;

[1] ceiling
[2] went
[3] the refectory
[4] tables
[5] furnished with benches
[6] dormitory
[7] provided
[8] infirmary
[9] MS. all
[10] stern on a height
[11] garrets
[12] very poor
[13] with difficulty
[14] observed
[15] as large as a tun
[16] brimful
[17] it hung
[18] jowl
[19] wagged about
[20] goose-egg
[21] so that
[22] flesh
[23] like a quagmire
[24] covered
[25] neatly
[26] Cf. Chaucer, *Prol.* 2
[27] made

Men myȝte reken ich a ryb,[1] so reufuli[2] þey weren.
His wiif walked him wiþ, wiþ a longe gode,[3]
In a cutted[4] cote[5] cutted full heyȝe,
Wrapped in a wynwe-schete[6] to weren[7] hire fro weders,[8]
Barfote on þe bare iis, þat þe blod folwede.
And at þe londes[9] ende laye a litell crombolle,[10]
And þeron lay a litell childe, lapped in cloutes,
And tweyne of tweie ȝeres olde, opon anoþer syde;
And alle þey songen o songe, þat sorwe was to heren;
Þey crieden alle o cry — a carefull[11] note.
Þe sely man siȝede sore, and seide: 'Children, beþ stille.' . . .
  Loke nowe, leve[12] man, beþ nouȝt þise ilyke
Fully to þe Farisens[13] in fele[14] of þise poyntes?
Al her brod beldyng[15] ben belded withe synne,
And in worchipe of þe werlde her wynnynge þei holden.
Þei schapen her chapolories,[16] and streccheþ hem brode,[17]
And launceþ[18] heiȝe her hemmes wiþ babelyng[19] in stretes;
Þei ben ysewed wiþ whiȝt silk, and semes full queynte,
Ystongen[20] wiþ stiches þat stareþ as silver.
And but[21] freres ben first yset at sopers and at festes,
Þei wiln ben wonderly wroþ, ywis, as Y trowe;
But þey ben at þe lordes borde, louren[22] þey willeþ,
He mot bygynne þat borde,[23] a beggere[24] — wiþ sorwe[25]! —
And first sitten in se[26] in her synagoges,[27]
Þat beþ here heyȝe hellehous of Kaymes[28] kynde;
For þouȝ a man in her mynster a masse wolde heren,
His siȝt schal so be set on sundrye werkes,

1 count each rib
2 miserable, sorry-looking
3 goad
4 cut short
5 skirt, petticoat
6 a sheet used in winnowing corn
7 protect
8 storms
9 strip's
10 crumb-bowl
11 full of [illegible]
12 dear
13 Pharisees
14 many
15 building
16 scapulars
17 Matt. 23. 5-7
18 fling
19 babbling
20 pricked through
21 unless
22 look sourly
24 beggar that he is (perha[illegible] with allusion to the be[illegible] ging friars)
25 bad luck to him
26 seat
27 churches
28 Cain's (CAIM = Carmelit[illegible] Augustinians, Jacobi[illegible] Minorites — the four [illegible] ders of friars)

Þe penounes,[1] and þe pomels,[2] and poyntes[3] of scheldes
Wiþdrawen his devocion, and dusken[4] his herte;
I likne it to a lymȝerde[5] to drawen men to hell. . . .
 Þei usen russet[6] also, somme of þis freres,
Þat bitokneþ travaile and trewþe opon erþe.
Bote loke whou þis lorels[7] labouren þe erþe,
But freten[8] þe frute þat þe folk full lellich biswynkeþ[9];
Wiþ travail of trewe men þei tymbren[10] her houses,
And of curious[11] cloþe her copes þei biggen[12];
And als[13] his getynge is greet he schal ben good holden;
And ryȝt as dranes[14] doþ nouȝt but drynkeþ up þe huny,
Whan been[15] wiþe her bysynesse han brouȝt it to hepe,
Riȝt so fareþ freres wiþ folke opon erþe:
Þey freten up þe fu[r]ste froyt,[16] and falsliche lybbeþ.
But alle freres eten nouȝt ylich good mete,
But after þat his wynnynge is, is his wellfare;
And after þat he bringeþ home, his bed schal ben grayþed[17];
And after þat his rychesse is rauȝt,[18] he schal ben redy served.
But see þiself in þi siȝt whou somme of hem walkeþ
Wiþ cloutede[19] schon, and cloþes ful feble,
Wel neiȝ forwerd,[20] and þe wlon[21] offe;
And his felawe in a froke worþ swiche fiftene,[22]
Arayd in rede sc[h]on — and elles were reuþe[23] —
And sexe copes or seven in his celle hongeþ.
Þouȝ for fayling of good his fellawe schulde sterve,[24]
He wolde nouȝt lenen[25] him a peny his liif for to holden.
Y miȝt tymen þo troiflardes[26] to toilen wiþ þe erþe,
Tylyen,[27] and trewliche lyven, and her flech tempren!

nnons
mmels, bosses
visions
rken, cloud
limed twig
he Franciscans wore gray habits originally, but later russet-brown
od-for-nothings
vour
9 faithfully obtain by labor
10 build
11 MS. þe curious
12 fashion (?); buy (?)
13 according as
14 drones
15 bees
16 first-fruits
17 prepared
18 reached, obtained
19 patched
20 worn out
21 borders, hems
22 fifteen of such
23 a pity
24 die
25 lend, give
26 compel the triflers
27 till the ground

Now mot ich soutere[1] his sone setten to schole,
And ich a beggers brol[2] on þe booke lerne,
And worþ to[3] a writere, and wiþ a lorde dwell,
Oþer falsly to a frere, þe fend for to serven.
So of þat beggers brol a bychop schal worþen,
Among þe peres of þe lond prese[4] to sitten,
And lordes sones lowly to þo losells aloute[5];
Knyȝtes croukeþ[6] hem to, and crucheþ[7] full lowe;
And his syre a soutere, ysuled[8] in grees,
His teeþ wiþ toylinge of[9] leþer tatered as a sawe!
Alaas! þat lordes of þe londe leveþ[10] swiche wrechen,
And leneþ[11] swiche lorels for her lowe wordes!
Þey schulden maken bichopes her owen breþren childre,
Oþer of some gentil blod, and[12] so it best semed,
And foster none faytoures,[13] ne swiche false freres,
To maken fatt and full, and her fleche combren[14]!
For her kynde were more to yclense diches
Þan ben to sopers yset first, and served wiþ silver! . . .
For Fraunces[15] founded hem nouȝt to faren[16] on þat wise,
Ne Domynik[17] dued[18] hem never swiche drynkers to worþe
Ne Helye[19] ne Austen[20] swiche liif never used,
But in poverte of spirit spended her tyme.

1 cobbler
2 brat
3 become
4 press forward
5 bow down to the wretches
6 bend down
7 crouch
8 soiled
9 tugging at
10 believe
11 enrich
12 if
13 traitors, deceivers
14 cumber, gorge
15 St. Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscan order
16 do
17 Dominic, foun the Dominic
18 endowed
19 Elijah
20 St. Augustine

ILLUSTRATIONS OF LIFE AND MANNERS

SONG AGAINST THE FRIARS

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Ne no man of religioun,
Gyfen hem so to devocioun
    As done thes holy frers.
For summe gyven ham to chyvalry,
Somme to riote and ribaudery;
Bot ffrers gyven ham to grete study,
    And to grete prayers.
  Who so kepes thair reule al,
    Bothe in worde and dede,
  I am ful siker that he shal
    Have heven blis to mede.[1]

Men may se by thair contynaunce
That thai are men of grete penaunce,
And also that thair sustynaunce
    Simple is and wayke.
I have lyved now fourty ȝers,
And fatter men about the neres[2]
Ȝit sawe I never then are these frers,
    In contreys ther thai rayke.[3]

[1] as reward
[2] kidneys; cf. Isa. 34. 6
[3] wander about

Now mot ich soutere[1] his sone setten to schole,
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[1] cobbler
[2] brat
[3] become
[4] press forward
[5] bow down to the wretches
[6] bend down
[7] crouch
[8] soiled
[9] tugging at
[10] believe
[11] enrich
[12] if
[13] traitors, deceivers
[14] cumber, gorge
[15] St. Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscan order
[16] do
[17] Dominic, founder of the Dominicans
[18] endowed
[19] Elijah
[20] St. Augustine

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    And to grete prayers.
  Who so kepes thair reule al,
    Bothe in worde and dede,
  I am ful siker that he shal
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That thai are men of grete penaunce,
And also that thair sustynaunce
    Simple is and wayke.
I have lyved now fourty ȝers,
And fatter men about the neres[2]
Ȝit sawe I never then are these frers,
    In contreys ther thai rayke.[3]

[1] as reward   [2] kidneys; cf. Isa. 34. 6   [3] wander about

Meteles,[1] so megre are thai made,
And penaunce so puttes ham doun,
That ichone is an hors-lade,[2]
When he shal trusse of toun.[3]

Allas, that ever it shuld be so,
Suche clerkes as thai about shuld go,
Fro toun to toun by two and two,
To seke thair sustynaunce!
By God that al this world wan,
He that that ordre first bygan
Me thynk certes it was a man
Of simple ordynaunce.[4]
For thai have noght to lyve by,
Thai wandren here and there,
And dele with dyvers marcerye,[5]
Right as thai pedlers were.

Thai dele with purses, pynnes, and knyves,
With gyrdles, gloves, for wenches and wyves;
Bot ever bacward the husband thryves
Ther thai are haunted tille.[6]
For when the gode man is fro hame,
And the frere comes to oure dame,
He spares nauther for synne ne shame
That he ne dos his wille.
Ȝif thai no helpe of houswyves had,
When husbandes are not inne,
The freres welfare were ful bad,
For thai shuld brewe ful thynne.

Somme frers beren pelure[7] aboute,
For grete ladys and wenches stoute,

[1] *without meat*
[2] *horse load*
[3] *pack out of town*
[4] *regulation, rule of life*
[5] *mercery (textile goods and small wares)*
[6] *where they are accustomed to go*
[7] *fur*

To reverce[1] with thair clothes withoute,
Al after that thai ere[2]—
For somme vaire,[3] and somme gryse,[4]
For somme bugee,[5] and for somme byse[6];
And also many a dyvers spyse,
In bagges about thai bere.
Al that for women is plesand
Ful redy certes have thai;
Bot lytel gyfe thai the husband,
That for al shal pay.

Trantes[7] thai can,[8] and many a jape[9];
For somme can with a pound of sape[10]
Gete him a kyrtelle[11] and a cape,
And somwhat els therto.
Wherto shuld I othes swere?
Ther is no pedler that pak can bere
That half so dere can selle his gere
As[12] a frer can do.
For if he gife a wyfe a knyfe
That cost bot penys two,
Worthe ten knyves, so mot I thryfe,
He wyl have er he go.

Iche man that here shal lede his life,
That has a faire doghter or a wyfe,
Be war that no frer ham shryfe,
Nauther loude ne stille.
Thof women seme of hert ful stable,
With faire byhest and with fable
Thai can make thair hertes chaungeable,
And thair likynges fulfille.

1 to turn back, so as to show the lining
2 plow (?)
3 fur made from the skin of a kind of squirrel
4 gray fur
5 lambskin fur
6 a (brown ?) fur used for trimming
7 tricks
8 know
9 jest
10 soap
11 mantle
12 MS. then

Be war[1] ay with the lymitour,[2]
And with his felawe bathe,
And[3] thai make maystries[4] in thi bour,
It shal turne the to scathe.[5]

ON THE MINORITE FRIARS

This poem, found in the same manuscript as the preceding one, is also reprinted from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (1. 268–70). The writer seems to be describing pictorial representations.

Of thes frer mynours me thenkes moch wonder,
That waxen are thus hauteyn,[6] that som tyme weren under;
Among men of holy chirch thai maken mochel blonder[7];
Nou he that sytes[8] us above make ham sone to sonder[9]!
With an O and an I, thai praysen not Seynt Poule;
Thai lyen on Seyn[t] Fraunceys, by my fader soule.

First thai gabben on[10] God, that alle men may se,
When thai hangen him on hegh on a grene tre,
With leves and with blossemes that bright are of ble,[11]
That was never Goddes Son, by my leute.[12]
With an O and an I, men wenen that thai wede,[13]
To carpe so of clergy that[14] can not thair Crede.

Thai have done him on a croys fer up in the skye,
And festned on hym wyenges, as he shuld flie;
This fals feyned byleve[15] shal thai soure bye,[16]
On that lovelych Lord so for to lye.
With an O and an I, one sayd ful stille:
'Armachan[17] distroy ham, if it is Goddes wille!'

1 cautious
2 friar licensed to beg within certain limits; cf. Chaucer, *Wife of Bath's Tale* 9–25
3 if
4 play tricks
5 to your harm
6 haughty
7 confusion
8 sits
9 disperse them soon
10 make sport of
11 hue
12 loyalty, faith
13 go mad
14 MS. thai
15 belief
16 Cf. 112 28
17 Richard Fitzr[alph] (d. 1360)

Ther comes one out of the skye in a grey goun,
As it were an hoghyerd[1] hyand[2] to toun;
Thai have mo[3] goddes then we, I say by Mahoun,[4]
Alle men under ham that ever beres croun.[5]
With an O and an I, why shuld thai not be shent[6]?
Ther wantes noght bot a fyre that thai nere alle brent.[7]

Went I forther on my way in that same tyde[8];
Ther I sawe a frere blede in myddes of his syde;
Bothe in hondes and in fete had he woundes wyde.
To serve to that same frer the pope mot abyde.[9]
With an O and an I, I wonder of thes dedes,
To se a pope holde a dische whyl the frer bledes.

A cart was made al of fyre, as it shuld be;
A gray frer I sawe therinne, that best lyked me.
Wele I wote thai shal be brent, by my leaute;
God graunt me that grace that I may it se.
With an O and an I, brent be thai alle,
And alle that helpes therto faire mot byfalle[10]!

Thai preche alle of povert, bot that love thai noght;
For gode mete to thair mouthe the toun is thurgh soght.[11]
Wyde are thair wonnynges,[12] and wonderfully wroght;
Murdre and horedome[13] ful dere has it boght.
With an O and an I, for sixe pens er thai fayle,
Sle thi fadre, and jape[14] thi modre, and thai wyl the assoile.

1 swineherd
2 hastening
3 more
4 Mahomet
5 tonsure
6 destroyed
7 burned
8 time
9 must wait
10 may fair (good) befall
11 searched through
12 dwellings
13 whoredom
14 lie with

THE REPLY OF FRIAR DAW TOPIAS

About 1401. This selection, from MS. Oxford Digby 41, is here reprinted from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* 2. 76–8.

Forthermore[1] thou spekest
Of oure costli houses;
Thou seist it were more almes
To helpen the nedy
Than to make siche housynge
To men that ben deede,
To whiche longith[2] but graves
And mornynge-housis.
Jak, is not a man beter
Than a rude best?
Ȝit makist thou to thi sheep a shepen,[3]
And to thi hors a stable;
And many a pore man ther is
That hath noon hillyng,[4]
But oonly heven is his hous.
The bestes stond kevered;
Whi houses thou not pore men
As wele as thi beestis?
Take hede to sumwhat
That is seid biforen:
And[5] thou answere to my question,
Answer to thin owne.
Thou carpist[6] also of oure coveitise,
And sparist the sothe;
Thou seist we ben more ryal[7]
Than ony lordis.
Coventis have wee noon, Jack,
But cloistrers we ben callid,
Foundid[1] afor[8] with charite,

[1] MS. ff-
[2] belong, are fitting
[3] sheep-cote
[4] shelter
[5] if
[6] talkest
[7] royal, regal
[8] aforetime

Or that he were flemyd[1];
But sith[2] entride envie,
And revyd[3] hath oure houses,
That unnethes[4] the hillinge[5]
Hangith on the sparres[6];
And ȝit thou thinkist hem over-good—
Yvel fare thou therfore!
Jak, where saw thou ever frere-houses
Thourȝout the rewme[7]
Liche in ony rialte[8]
To the Toure of Londoun,
To Wyndesore, to Wodestoke,
To Wallingforde, to Shene,
To Herforde, to Eltham,
To Westmynster, to Dover[9]?
How maist thou for rebukyng
Lye so lowde,
To saye that oure covetise
Passith the lordes'?

THE LAND OF COKAYGNE

The Land of Cokaygne, which has been called the earliest extant English fabliau, is not a fabliau at all, but rather a piece of Rabelaisian satire. With the satire, which is directed against monks and nuns, and possibly includes some local and specific references, are, however, mingled touches of the purely comic spirit. Cf. Pherecrates, in Athenæus 6. 97.

An Old French poem similar in character is found in Barbazan and Méon's *Fabliaux et Contes* 4. 175–81, entitled *Li Fabliaus de Coquaigne* (though, again, not a fabliau). Here the details are somewhat different, and the satiric intent, and reference to the religious orders, much less marked, but the general picture is of the same sort. One of the most amusing details is similar:

Par les rues vont rostissant
Les crasses oes, et tornant
Tout par eles [lines 37–9].

1 before it was banished
2 afterward
3 robbed; MS. renyd
4 so that scarcely
5 roof
6 rafters, beams
7 realm
8 royalty
9 Royal castles or palaces were in all these places

Here there are two rivers of wine, of which he who will may drink; four Easters, Christmases, and All-Saints Days every year: but a Lent only once in twenty years!

Our text is reproduced (120 lines out of 190) from Mätzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben* (1. 148 ff.), which follows MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 913. It has been dated ca. 1305.

Fur[1] in see bi west Spaygne[2]
Is a lond ihote[3] Cokaygne.
Þer nis lond under heveriche[4]
Of wel,[5] of godnis, hit iliche;
Þoȝ Paradis be miri and briȝt,
Cokaygn is of fairir siȝt.
What is þer in Paradis
Bot grasse, and flure, and grene ris[6]?
Þoȝ þer be joi and grete dute,[7]
Þer nis mete[8] bote frute;
Þer nis halle, bure,[9] no benche,
Bot watir, manis þurst to quenche.
Beþ þer no man but two —
Hely[10] and Enok[11] also;
Elinglich[12] may hi go
Whar þer woniþ[13] men no mo.
In Cokaygne is met and drink
Wiþute care, how,[14] and swink.[15]
Þe met is trie,[16] þe drink is clere,
To none, russin,[17] and sopper.
I sigge[18] forsoþ, boute were,[19]
Þer nis lond on erthe is pere[20];
Under heven nis lond, iwisse,[21]
Of so mochil joi and blisse.
Þer is mani swete siȝte:
Al is dai, nis þer no niȝte;

1 far
2 MS. Spayngne
3 called
4 heaven's domain
5 prosperity
6 branches
7 delight
8 is no food
9 chamber
10 Elijah; cf. 2 Kings 2. 11
11 Enoch; cf. Gen. 5. 24
12 sorrowfully
13 dwell
14 trouble
15 labor
16 select
17 (?)
18 say
19 without doubt
20 its equal
21 indeed

Þer nis baret[1] noþer strif;
Nis þer no deþ, ac[2] ever lif;
Þer nis lac of met no cloþ;
Þer nis man no womman wroþ;
Þer nis serpent, wolf, no fox,
Hors no capil,[3] kowe no ox;
Þer nis schepe, no swine, no gote,
Ne non horwȝ,[4] la,[5] God it wot,
Nother harace,[6] nother stode[7];
Þe londe is ful of oþer gode.
Nis þer flei,[8] fle,[9] no lowse,
In cloþ, in toune, bed, no house;
Þer nis dunnir,[10] slete, no haile,[11]
No non vile worme, no snaile,[12]
No non storme, rein, no winde;
Þer is man no womman blinde;
Ok[13] al is game,[14] joi, and gle.
Wel is him þat þer mai be!
  Þer beþ rivers gret and fine,
Of oile, melk, honi, and wine;
Watir serviþ þer to noþing
Bot to siȝt and to waiissing.[15]
Þer is [mani][16] maner frute;
Al is solas and dedute.[17]
  Þer is a wel fair abbei
Of white monkes and of grei:
Þer beþ bowris and halles;
Al of pasteiis[18] beþ þe walles,
Of fleis, of fisse, and rich met,
Þe likfullist[19] þat man mai et,
Fluren[20] cakes beþ þe scingles[21] alle

1 quarrel
2 but
3 nag
4 defilement
5 truly
6 place for breeding horses
7 stud
8 fly
9 flea
10 thunder
11 hail; MS. hawle
12 MS. snawile
13 but
14 mirth
15 washing
16 em. M.
17 delight
18 pasties, pies
19 most delicious
20 flour
21 shingles

Of cherche, cloister, boure, and halle;
Þe pinnes[1] beþ fat podinges —
Rich met to princez and [to] kinges;
Man mai þerof et inoȝ
Al wiþ riȝt, and noȝt wiþ woȝ[2]:
Al is commune to ȝung and old,
To stoute and sterne, mek and bold.
  Þer is a cloister, fair and liȝt,
Brod and lang, of sembli[3] siȝt.
Þe pilers of þat cloistre alle
Beþ iturned of cristale,
With har bas[4] and capitale
Of grene jaspe and rede corale.
  In þe praer[5] is a tre,
Swiþe likful[6] for to se:
Þe rote is gingevir and galingale[7];
Þe siouns[8] beþ al sedwale[9];
Trie maces beþ þe flure;
Þe rind, canel[10] of swet odur;
Þe frute, gilofre[11] of gode smakke[12];
Of cucubes[13] þer nis no lakke.
  Þer beþ rosis of rede ble,[14]
And lilie likful for to se —
Þai faloweþ[15] never day no niȝt;
Þis aȝt be[16] a swete siȝt.
Þer beþ iiii willis[17] in þe abbei
Of triacle[18] and halwei,[19]
Of baum[20] and ek piement,[21]
Ever ernend[22] to riȝt rent[23];
Of þam[24] stremis al þe molde.[25]

[1] pinnacles
[2] wrong
[3] seemly
[4] their base
[5] meadow
[6] very attractive
[7] ginger and galingale (sweet cyperus)
[8] scions, shoots
[9] zedoary
[10] cinnamon
[11] gillyflower
[12] taste
[13] cubebs (a pungent spice)
[14] hue
[15] fade
[16] ought to be
[17] wells
[18] treacle (a medicine)
[19] healing water
[20] balm
[21] spiced wine sweetened with honey
[22] running
[23] profit
[24] these; MS. þai
[25] earth, nom.

Stonis preciuse, and golde:
Þer is saphir and uniune,[1]
Carbuncle and astiune,[2]
Smaragde,[3] lugre,[4] and prassiune,[5]
Beril, onix, topasiune,[6]
Ametist and crisolite,
Calcedun and epetite.[7]
Þer beþ briddes mani and fale[8] —
Þrostil, þruisse,[9] and niȝtingale,
Chalandre[10] and wodwale,[11]
And oþer briddes wiþout tale,[12]
Þat stinteþ[13] never by har miȝt[14]
Miri to sing dai and niȝt.
Ȝite I do ȝow mo to witte[15]:
Þe gees irostid on þe spitte
Fleez[16] to þat abbai, God hit wot,
And grediþ[17]: 'Gees al hote, al hot!'
Hi bringeþ garlek gret plente,
Þe best idiȝt[18] þat man mai se.
Þe leverokes[19] — þat beþ cuþ[20] —
Liȝtiþ adun to manis muþ,
Idiȝt in stu[21] ful swiþe wel,
Pudrid[22] wiþ gilofre and canel.
Nis no spech of no drink;
Ak take inoȝ wiþute swink.
Whan þe monkes gooþ[23] to masse,
All þe fenestres[24] þat beþ of glasse
Turneþ into cristal briȝt,
To ȝive [þe] monkes more liȝt.
When þe masses beþ iseiid,

1 pearl
2 astrion (*perhaps* asteriated sapphire)
3 emerald
4 ligure
5 chrysoprase
6 topaz
7 hepatite
8 numerous
9 thrush
10 a Mediterranean species of lark; see *Romance of the Rose* (81, 663), 914
11 woodpecker
12 number
13 cease
14 according to their ability
15 give you to know further
16 fly; MS. fleeȝ
17 cry out
18 dressed
19 larks
20 well known
21 made into a stew
22 sprinkled
23 MS. geeþ
24 windows

And þe bokes up ileiid,[1]
Þe cristal turniþ into glasse—
In state þat hit raþer[2] wasse.

THE GOSSIPS' FEAST

The following poem is reprinted from Dyboski's *Songs, Carols, etc.* (E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. 101), an edition of Richard Hill's Commonplace-Book (MS. Oxford Balliol 354). The manuscript contains records as late as 1536, but our text differs only slightly from that of Wright in Percy Society 23. 91–5, which is dated by the editor 1461–85, and from which two or three readings are here adopted (marked W.). Our text is on pages 106–8 of Dyboski.

Hoow, gossip myne, gossip myn,
Whan will we go to þe wyne,
Good gossip[is myn]?

I shall you tell a full good sport,
How gossippis gader them on a sort,[3]
Ther seke[4] bodyes to comforte,
When they mete
In lane or stret,
God[5] gossipis myn, [a!]

But I dare not, for þer dissplesans,[6]
Tell of þes maters half the substance;
But ȝet sumwhat of þer governance,[7]
As ferre as I dare,
I will declare,
Good gossipis myn, [a!]

'Good gossip myn, wher have ye be?
Hit is so long sith I you see;
Wher is þe best wyne, tell you me!
Can ye owght tell?'
'Ye, full well,
Good gossippis myn, [a!]

1 laid
2 formerly
3 in a company
4 sick
5 good
6 lest I displease them
7 proceedings

I know a drawght of mery-go-down,[1]
The beste it is in all this town,
But yet I wolde not, for my gown,
My husbond wyste.'
'Ye may me triste,[2]
Good gossippis myn, [a!']

'Call forth owr gossippis by and by,
Elynore, Johan, and Margery,
Margret, Alis, and Cecely,
For þei will cum,
Both all and som,
Good gossippis myn, a!

And eche of them will sumwhat bryng,
Gose, or pigge, or capons wynge,
Pastes[3] of pygynnes, or sum oþer thyng;
For we muste ete
Sum maner mett,
Good gossippis myn, a!

Go beffore by tweyn and tweyn,
Wisely, þat ye be not seen,
For I muste home and cum agayn,
To witt, ywis,
Wher my husbond is,
Good gossippis myn, a!

A strype or two God myght send me,
Yf my husbond myght here see me.'
'She þat is aferde, lett her flee,'
Quod Alis than;
'I dred no man,
Good gossippis myn, a!'

[1] strong ale [2] trust [3] pasties, pies

'Now be we in þe tavern sett,
A drawght of þe best lett hym fett,
To bryng owr husbondis owt of dett,
For we will spend
Till God more send,
Good gossippis myn, a!'

Eche of them browght forth þer disshe;
Sum browght flesshe, and sum [browght] fisshe.
Quod Margret meke now, with a wisshe:
'I wold Anne were here,
She wold mak us chere,
Good gossippis myn, a!'

'How say ye, gossippis? Is þis wyn good?'
'Þat is it,' quod Elynore, 'by þe rode!
It chereth þe hart and comforteth þe blod.
Such jonkets[1] amonge
Shall make us leve[2] long.
Good gossippis [myn, a]!'

Anne bade me fill a pot of Muscadell,
'For of all wynes I love it well;
Swet wynes kepe my body in hele[3];
Yf I had it nowght,
I shuld tak thowght,
Good gossippis myn, a!'

'How loke ye, gossip, at þe bordis end?
Not mery, gossip? God it amend!
All shall be well, els God defend;
Be mery and glad,
And sit not so sade,
Good gossip myn, a!'

[1] delicacies (drinks); MS. jonkers; W. jonchettes [2] live [3] health, well-being

'Wold God I had don after your counsell,
For my husbond is so fell[1]
He betith me lyke þe devill of hell;
And þe more I crye,
Þe lesse mercy,
Good gossippis myn, a!'

Alis with a lowde voys spak than:
'Ywis,[2]' she said, 'litill good he can,
Þat betith or striketh any woman,
And specially his wyff;
God geve hym short lyff,
Good gossippis myn, a!'

Margret meke said: 'So mot I thryve,
I know no man þat is alyve
Þat gevith me ii strokis, but he [shall][3] have v;
I am not afferd,
Thowgh he have a berde,
Good gossippis myn, a!'

On[4] cast down her shot,[5] and went away.
'Gossip,' quod Elynore, 'what dide she pay?'
'Not but a peny; loo, þerfor I say,
She shall no more
Be of owr lore,[6]
Good gossippis myn, a!

Suche gestis[7] we may have ynow,
Þat will not for þer shot alowe.[8]
With whom com she, gossip?' 'With you!'
'Nay,' quod Johan,
'I com aloon,
Good gossippis myn, a!'

[1] cruel
[2] W; MS. evis
[3] W.
[4] one
[5] contribution, share
[6] school, sort
[7] guests
[8] provide

'Now rekyn owr shot, and go we hens;
What cummeth to eche of us?' 'But iii pens.[1]'
'Parde, þis is but a small expens
For suche a sorte,
And all but sporte,
Good gossipis myn, a!'

'Torn down þe stret, whan ye cum owt,
And we will cumpas rownd abowt.'
'Gossip,' quod Anne, 'what nedith þat dowt?[2]
Your husbond is pleased,
Whan ye be eased,
Good gossippis myn, a!

Whatsoever any man thynk,
We com for nowght but for good drynk;
Now let us go home and wynke,
For it may be seen
Wher we have ben,
Good gossippis myn, a!'

This is þe thowght þat gossippis take:
Ons in þe wek, mery will they make,
And all small drynkis þei will forsake;
But wyne of þe best
Shall have no rest,
Good gossippis myn, a!

Sum be at þe tavern þrise[3] in þe weke,
And so be sum every day eke,
Or ellis þei will gron and mak them sek,
For thyngis used
Will not be refused[4];
Good gossippis myn, a!

[1] MS. d.
[2] fear
[3] MS. IIIes
[4] for things one is accusto
to cannot be done with

STANS PUER AD MENSAM

The following poem, by John Lydgate (1370?–1451?), the follower and imitator of Chaucer, is taken from the print of MS. Harl. 2251 (about 1460) in *The Babees Book*, ed. Furnivall (E.E.T.S. 32). With its precepts one may compare Chaucer's characterization of the Prioress (*Prol.* 127–36):

At mete wel ytaught was she withalle;
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fille upon hir brest.
In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene
That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte.

Our extract comprises lines 15–42, 57–70. Two or three emendations are from the Lambeth MS.

Who spekithe to the in any maner place,
Rudely cast nat thyn ye [1] adowne,
But with a sadde chiere [2] loke hym in the face.
Walke demurely by strete in the towne;
Advertise the withe [3] wisdom and reasoune.
Withe dissolute laughters do thow non offence
Tofore [4] thy soverayn,[5] whiles he is in presence.

Pare clene thy nailes, thyn handes wasshe also
Tofore mete, and whan thow dooest arise;
Sitte in that place thow art assigned to;
Prease [6] nat to [7] hye in no maner wise;
And til thow se afore the thy service,[8]
Be nat to hasty on brede for to byte,
Of gredynesse lest men wolde the edwyte.[9]

Grennyng and mowes [10] at the table eschewe [11];
Cry nat to loude; kepe honestly [12] silence;

[1] eye
[2] sober expression
[3] turn your attention to
[4] before
[5] master
[6] press
[7] too
[8] plate of food
[9] reproach, twit; MS. end-
[10] grinning and grimaces
[11] MS. eschowe
[12] politely

To enboce[1] thy jowis[2] withe mete [it] is nat diewe[3];
With ful mowthe speke nat, lest thow do offence;
Drynk nat bretheles for hast ne necligence;
Kepe clene thy lippes from fat of flesshe or fysshe;
Wype clene thi spone, leve it nat in thy disshe.

Of brede ibyten no soppis[4] that thow make;
In ale nor wyne withe hande leve no fattenes;
With mowthe enbrewed[5] thi cuppe thou nat take;
Defoule[6] no napery[7] for no rekelesnes;
[Loude][8] for to souppe is agenst gentiles.
[N]evyr at mete begynne thow nat stryf[9];
Thi teth also thow pike nat with no knyf. . . .

Droppe nat thi brest withe sawce ne with potage;
Brynge no knyves unskoured to the table;
Fil nat thy spone, lest in the cariage
It went beside,[10] whiche were nat comendable.
Be quyke and redy, meke and servisable,
Wele awaityng to fulfylle anone
What that thy soverayne comau[n]dithe to[11] be done.

And wharesoever that thow dyne or soupe,
Of gentilesse take salt withe thy knyf;
And be wele ware thow blowe nat in the cuppe.
Reverence thy felawe, gynne[12] withe hym no stryf;
Be[13] thy powere, kepe pees all thy lyf.
Interrupt nat, whereso [that][14] thou wende,
None other mans tale, til he have made an ende.

1 stuff out
2 jaws
3 fitting
4 sops
5 soiled
6 defile; MS. enbrewe (em. from Lambeth MS.)
7 table-linen
8 em. from Lamb.
9 MS. stryfe
10 should spill over
11 MS. the to (em. from Lamb.)
12 begin
13 according to
14 em. from Lamb.

CHARM FOR THE TOOTHACHE

From MS. Linc. Cath. Thornton A. 1. 17, printed in Horstman's edition of Richard Rolle, 1. 375.

Say þe charme thris to[1] *it be sayd ix tymes, and ay thris at a charemynge.*[2]

I conjoure the, laythely[3] beste, with[4] þat ilke spere
Þat Longyous[5] in his hande gane bere,
And also with ane hatte of thorne
Þat one my Lordis hede was borne,
With alle þe wordis, mare and lesse,
With þe office of þe messe,
With my Lorde and his xii postills,[6]
With oure Lady and hir x maydenys,
Saynt Margrete, þe haly quene,
Saynt Katerin, þe haly virgyne —
Ix tymes Goddis forbott,[7] þou wikkyde worme,
Þat ever þou make any rystynge,[8]
Bot awaye mote þou wende
To þe erde[9] and þe stane.[10]

PREFACE TO A TREATISE ON MEDICINE

From the Payne manuscript, of the first half of the fifteenth century, printed in Furnivall's *Political, Religious, and Love Poems* (E.E.T.S. 15). Readings supplied from Sloane MS. 1314 are marked S.

The man þat wol of lechecraft[11] lere,
Red ovyr this book, and he may here
Many medycinis both good and trewe,
To hele sores both oolde and newe,
And preciouse medycinis, þorw Goddis grace

1 till
2 charming
3 loathsome
4 by
5 Longus, or Longinus, the Roman soldier who pierced the side of Christ
6 apostles
7 God forbid
8 delay (resting)
9 earth
10 stone
11 medicine

To save mens[1] lyves in diverse place.
Cryst, þat made bothe Est and West,
Geve grace her sowles have[2] god rest,
Evere more in hevene for to be,
In hevene wyt þe Trinite!
Herinne be medycinis, wythoutyn fable,
To hele alle sores þat ben curable,
Of swerd, of knyf, and of arwe[3] —
Be þe wounde wyde or narwe —
Of sper,[4] of quarel,[5] of dagger, of dart,
To make him hool in ilka[6] part,
So þe seek[7] wol do wysely,
And kepe himself fro surfety.
Be þe wounde nevere so deep,
Þerof thar[8] him take no kep,
So þat he drynke save[9] or anteoche,[10]
Him thar[8] not drede of þat outrage:
Be[11] þat on and twenti days be goon,
He schal be hol, both flesch and bon,
To ride and go in ilka[12] place,
Thorw þe verteu of Goddys grace.
Thus seyth Ypocras,[13] þe good surgien,
And Socrates and Galyen,[14]
Þat weren philisophres alle thre,
Þat tyme þe best in any countree:
In þis werld[15] were non her[16] pere,
As fer as any man coude here.

1 MS. men
2 may have
3 arrow
4 spear
5 a short, square-headed arrow
6 every; MS. ylke, S. ilka
7 if the sick man
8 he need; MS. dar, S. thar
9 sage
10 a medicinal potion of herbs boiled in white wine and honey
11 by the time
12 MS. ylka, S. ilka
13 Hippocrates
14 Galen
15 MS. weld
16 their

A MEDIÆVAL WILL

This will (from MS. Oxford Univ. Coll. 97), which the testator dates in the year 1399, is here reprinted from Horstman's edition of Richard Rolle, 2. 448–9.

In þe name of Almyghty Jesu, I, Robart F[olkyngham], beynge in hool and cleere mynde, þe vi day of Juylle,[1] þe ȝeere of our Lorde a thousand þre hundreth foure score and nynetene, make my testament and my laste wylle in þis manere. First, I bytake[2] my soule into þe hondes of Almyȝty God, bysechynge to oure lady, Seynte Marye, and to alle þe hoole compaygnye of heven, to preye for mercy and grace for me. Also I byqwethe my wrecchyd synfulle body to been heere in erthe, abydyng þe dredful doom of God, in suche place and manere as yt lyketh to his wyse endeles purveaunce.[3] Also I wylle þat at myn enterement þere be abowte my body bot twey[4] tapres of wex, and foure torches of wex, þe whiche torches I wille be ȝeven to brenne atte þe levacioun[5] of þe sacrement whil þei wil dure,[6] in þe same chirche þat I schalle be beryed inne. Also I wille þat, in alle þe haste þat yt may be doo after my deth, þere be sayde a thousande massez for my soule, and for alle Cristen soules. Also I bequethe, to be doon in almesse after[7] dyscrecioun of myn executours, in alle þe hast for my soule, for þe soules of my fadre, modre, and of alle hem þat I am endebtede to by way of kynde,[8] by way of ffrendshipe, or by way of restitucioun, for þe gode I have hade of heres[9] by any way, fourty pounde of golde, and, over þat, þat þei have part of alle þe preyours, gode dedes, and almesse þat I have do or ordeyned to be doo, as wel in þis testament as tofore[10] in alle my lyf. Sythene,[11] I ȝeve to William Flete, my cosyn, fourty marke of golde and alle myn horses, a new bed of Arras werke, twey payre schetes, my best haberjoun,[12] my pysan,[13] my ketylle-hat,[14] and myn armynge sworde of Burdeux. Also I bequeth to Johan of Brugge an haberjoun, a basynet,[15] a longe dagger of Burdeux harneyside[16] with sylver in manere of a sword.

1 July
2 commit
3 providence
4 two
5 lifting up
6 last
7 at the
8 kindred
9 theirs, them
10 before
11 next
12 habergeon, coat of mail
13 pisane (armor to protect chest and neck)
14 kind of helmet
15 basinet (steel headpiece)
16 mounted

Also, I ȝeve to Thomas Salman an haberjoun and a basynet.

Also, I byqueth to William Flete, my cosyn, alle þe remanant of myne armeure.

Also, I byqweth to Sir William Countour a longe sangwyn[1] gowne furryd with Calabir.[2]

Also, I byqueth to Thomas Heighelme a gowne of blak worstede, furred with bevere.

Also, I wylle þat alle þe debtez þat any man cane resonably axe, þat þei been payed. And þe remanant of alle my goode, whereso it be in þe handes of my debtours or elles,[3] I beqweth it to Jonet, my wyfe, to governe and susteyne with, hir and Elianore my doughtre, ande eke to doon in almesse for me, and for here, and for alle hem þat we been endebted to doon for by any way, as sche may resonabely, nouȝt amenysynge[4] gretely here lyflode ne here povre stat. The execucioun of whiche thynges abovesayd after my laste wille to be doon and fulfillide, I make myn executours Jonet my wyfe, William Wenloke, Squiere, Sire Willjam Countour, Preste, Thomas Heighelme, Thomas Salman, William Flete, my cosyn; preyinge to hem for Goddes sake, for charitable dede of almesse, and for þe sovereyn trust I have in hem, þat þei wille take þis charge on hem, and refuse it by no maner way. Writen þe day and ȝere tofore nempned,[5] with myn owen honde, in witnesse of my laste wille, and ensealede with my seal.

THE LIBEL OF ENGLISH POLICY

The Libel (or *Little Book*) *of English Policy*, a plea for a strong navy, was written, according to internal evidence, after the siege of Calais by the Duke of Burgundy, in 1436, and before the death of the Emperor Sigismund in 1437. The siege of Calais, though unsuccessful, had roused England to a sense of the importance of controlling the straits; and the author of this poem, who is unknown, cleverly shows how all the commerce of Europe (generally directed toward the Low Countries) must needs pass through 'the narrow sea.' Control of the sea, therefore, would make England powerful. He reviews the exports and imports of the chief countries of Europe, showing intimate

1 blood-red

2 a kind of squirrel fur

3 elsewhere

5 named

acquaintance with the commercial life of his age. He may in some respects be compared with Chaucer's merchant, who

> wolde the see were kept for any thing
> Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle;

and his line

> Kepe thou the see, that is the walle of Englond,

recalls Shakespeare (*Rich. II* 2. 1. 48–50, 63):

> This precious stone, set in the silver sea,
> Which serves it in the office of a wall,
> Or as a moat defensive to a house. . . .
> England bound in with the triumphant sea.

His spirit, we are told (Traill, *Social England* 2. 347; cf. 340, 344 ff., 406) 'is exactly the spirit which animated the sea-captains and merchant adventurers of the golden age of Elizabeth.'

Our selections are from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* 2. 157–9, 160–1, 172–3, this text being printed from MS. Oxford Bodl. Laud. 704. Other editions are by Hertzberg (1878) and in Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, Glasgow, 1903, 2. 114–47. Emendations in the following pages are from the two other editions noted; *ff* has been changed to *f*.

The trewe processe of Englysh polycye —
  Of utterwarde [1] to kepe thys regne [2] in rest
Of oure England, that no man may denye,
  Nere [3] say of soth but it is one the best —
  Is thys, that who seith [4] Southe, Northe, Est, and West,
Cheryshe marchandyse, kepe th' amyralte, [5]
That we bee maysteres of the narowe see. [6]

For Sigesmonde, the grete emperoure
  Whyche yet regneth, whan [7] he was in this londe
Wyth Kynge Herry the Fifte, [8] prince of honoure,
  Here moche glorye, as hym thought, he fonde [9];
  A myghty londe, whyche hadde take on honde
To werre [10] in Fraunce and make mortalite,
And evere welle kepe [11] rounde aboute the see.

1 from (foes) without
2 kingdom
3 nor
4 professes to be of (?)
5 the admiralty
6 the Straits of Dover
7 In 1416
8 MS. V^te
9 MS. founde
10 war
11 MS. kept

And to the kynge thus he seyde: 'My brothere'—
When he perceyved too townes, Calys [1] and Dovere—
'Of alle youre townes to chese of one and othere,
To kepe the see, and sone to come overe
To werre oughtwardes,[2] and youre regne to recovere,
Kepe these too townes, sire, to [3] youre mageste
As youre tweyne eyne,[4] to kepe the narowe see.'

For if this see be kepte in tyme of werre,
Who cane here passe withought daungere and woo?
Who may eschape, who may myschef dyfferre [5]?
What marchaundye [6] may forby be agoo [7]?
For nedes hem muste take truse [8] every foo—
Flaundres, and Spayne, and othere, trust to me—
Or ellis hyndered alle for thys narowe see.

Therfore I caste me, by a lytele wrytinge,
To shewe att eye [9] thys conclusione,
For concyens, and for myne acquytynge
Ayenst God, and ageyne abusyon
And cowardyse, and to oure enmyes confusione;
For iiii thynges our noble [10] sheueth to me—
Kyng, shype, and swerde, and pouer of the see.

Where bene oure shippes, where bene oure swerdes, become [11]?
Owre enmyes bid for the shippe sette a shepe.
Allas! oure reule halteth, hit is benome [12];
Who dare weel say that lordeshyppe shulde take kepe [13]?
I wolle asaye, thoughe myne herte gynne to wepe,
To do thys werke, yf we wole ever the,[14]
For verry shame, to kepe aboute the see.[15]

1 Calais
2 outwards, in foreign lands
3 MS. and
4 eyes
5 postpone
6 merchandise
7 be carried past
8 make terms (with England)
9 to the eye
10 the gold coin called the noble
11 what has become of
12 taken away
13 heed
14 prosper
15 guard the circuit of the Channel

Shalle any prynce, what so be hys name,
  Wheche hathe nobles moche lyche oures,
Be lorde of see, and Flemmyngis to oure blame
  Stoppe us, take us, and so make fade the floures
  Of Englysshe state, and disteyne[1] oure honnoures?
For cowardyse, allas! hit shulde so be;
Therfore I gynne to wryte now of the see.

Knowe welle alle men that profites in certayne,[2]
Commodytes called, commynge out of Spayne,
And marchandy,[3] who so wylle wete what that is,
Bene fygues, raysyns, wyne bastarde,[4] and dates;
And lycorys, Syvyle[5] oyle, and grayne,[6]
Whyte Castelle[7] sope, and wax, is not in vayne;
Iren, wolle, wadmole,[8] gotefel,[9] kydefel[10] also —
For poynt-makers[11] fulle nedefulle be the two —
Saffron, quiksilver, wheche arne Spaynes marchandy,
Is into Flaundres shypped fulle craftylye,
Unto Bruges, as to here staple[12] fayre;
The haven of Sluse[13] they have[14] for here repayre,[15]
Wheche is cleped Swyn, thaire shyppes gydynge,
Where many vessells[16] and fayre arne abydynge.
But these merchandes, wyth there shyppes greet,
And suche chaffare[17] as they bye and gette
By the weyes, most nede take one honde
By the costes to passe of oure Englonde. . . .
  And whenne these seyde marchauntz discharged be
Of marchaundy in Flaundres neere the see,
Than they be charged agayn wyth marchaundy
That to Flaundres longeth[18] full rychelye;

1 sully
2 certain things
3 merchandise
4 a sweet wine, like muscadel
5 Seville
6 kermes
7 Castile
8 a coarse, hairy, woollen cloth
9 goatskin
10 kidskin
11 those who made leather lacing-strings
12 market
13 Sluys
14 MS. here havene
15 for them to resort to
16 vessels; MS. wessell
17 merchandise
18 belongs; MS. bougeth (em. Hertzberg)

19. **Sluse**: Edward III's naval victory at Sluys in 1340 gave England the mastery of the Channel for centuries.

Fyne clothe of Ipre,[1] that named is better than ou
Cloothe of Curtryke,[2] fyne cloothe of alle coloures
Moche fustyane, and also lynen cloothe.
But ye Flemmyngis, yf ye be not wrothe,
The grete substaunce of youre cloothe, at the full
Ye wot ye make hit of oure[3] Englissh wolle.
 The Janueys[4] comyne in sondre wyses
Into this londe, wyth dyverse marchaundyses,
In grete karrekkis,[5] arrayde wythouten lake
Wyth clothes of golde, silke, and pepir blake
They bringe wyth hem, and of wood[6] grete plente
Woole-oyle, wood-aschen,[7] by vessels[8] in the see,
Coton, roche-alum,[9] and gode golde of Jene.[10]
And they be charged wyth wolle ageyne, I wene,
And wollene clothe of owres, of colours alle.
And they aventure, as ofte it dothe byfalle,
Into Flaundres wyth suche thynge as they bye,
That is here[11] cheffe staple sykerlye[12];
And if they wolde be oure fulle ennemyse,
They shulde not passe our stremez with merchaundyse.
 The grete galees[13] of Venees and Florence
Be wel ladene wyth thynges of complacence,[14]
Alle spicerye and[15] grocers ware,
Wyth swete wynes, alle manere of chaffare,
Apes, and japes,[16] and marmusettes taylede,[17]
Nifles,[18] trifles, that litelle have availede,
And thynges wyth whiche they fetely[19] blere[20] oure eye,
Wyth thynges not enduryng that we bye—
For moche of thys chaffare that is wastable
Mighte be forborne, for[21] dere and dyssevable.[22]

[1] Ypres, in Belgium
[2] Courtrai, in Belgium
[3] MS. youre
[4] Genoese
[5] caracks, galleons
[6] woad (blue dyestuff)
[7] wood-ashes; MS. woad-
[8] MS. wesshelle
[9] rock alum
[10] Genoa
[11] their
[12] in truth
[13] galleys
[14] things that give pleasure, articles of luxury
[16] trinkets
[17] marmosets with ta
[18] baubles, 'notions'
[19] cleverly
[20] dim
[21] as
[22] deceptive

THE GUILD OF ST. LEONARD

The following account of the guild of St. Leonard was returned to the 'King in Council, by order of Parliament,' in 1389. Our text of it is taken from Toulmin Smith's *English Gilds* (E.E.T.S. 40. 49–50).

In honore Sancti Leonardi confessoris. In þe worchep of God allemyghti, and of his modir Seynt Mary, and of alle þe holy company of heven, and specially of þe holy confessour Seynt Leonard, þis gilde was begonne in Damgate in þe toun of Lenne,[1] þorow þe devocion of men and women, to fyndyn[2] beforn on ymage in þe Chirche of Seynt Jame of Lenn, in þe worchep of God and of Seynt Leonard, on candelle of i li.[3] waxe, to brenne every[4] festivale day in þe ȝere, aforn þe ymage of Seynt Leonard. Alleso it is ordeyned, be on assent of alle þe bretheryn, þat everiche brothir and sistir shal offren at þe chirche of Seynt Jame, on þe Soneday nexte aftir þe fest of Seynt Leonard,[5] ob.,[6] in þe worchep of God and Seynt Leonard. Alleso it is ordeyned, be on assent of þe brethren, to have foure morspeches[7] in þe ȝere. Þe firste shal bene þe Moneday neste aftir þe forseide Soneday. And at þat mornspeche, þorow on assent of alle þe brethen, to chesen[8] an aldirman, wise and able to reule þe company to þe worchep of God; and also foure men for to reseyven and kepyn þe katel[9] of þe gilde; and also on certayne oficere to warnyn alle þe brethren to comyn to chirche; and also on clerke, to wryten þe katel of þe gilde. Þe secunde morspeche shal bene aftir þe Purificacioun of our Levedy.[10] Þe thred, aftir þe feste of Phelip and Jacob.[11] Þe fourte, aftir þe feste of Seynt Petre *Ad Vincula*.[12] Alleso it is ordeyned, be on assent of þe brethren, be als mechil as[13] þe lyght fornseide ne may nout be meyntened in þe tyme for to come, every man þat wille with good devocion comyn into þis ffraternite shal pay iii s. Alleso, if any brothir or sistir deye, þe aldirman shal comand þe oficere to warnyn alle þe bretheryn and sisteryn to bryng þe cors to þe chirche,

1 Lynn (King's Lynn, of Norfolk)
2 provide
3 one pound
4 MS. overy
5 St. Leonard's day is Nov. 6
6 a half-penny (obolus)
7 periodical assemblies held on the morrow after the guild-feast
8 choose
9 property
10 Feb. 2
11 Philip and James; May 1
12 Aug. 1
13 inasmuch as

with waxe brennend, and þe waxe for to brenne in þe tyme of service. And every broþir and sistir shal offren at þe messe for þe body ob. Ȝefe any brothir or sistir of þis company be in any mischefe, þorow losse of þe se,[1] or any other myshappes, þorow Godes[2] sond,[3] þe company shal ben gadered togedir and helpyn hym. Ȝefe any broþer or sistir of þis gild dye within a mile abouten, and have nout whereof to bryng hym to þe erthe,[4] þe aldirman and þe gilde-brethren shuln wend, and bryng hym to þe erthe on þeire owe costages.[5] And if any broþir dye within þe iii mile aboutyn, þe aldirman shal gon and beryne[6] hym, or ellis hyren a man of here costages to bryng hym to þe erthe. Þere shal no broþir ne sistir sene othir in prison, þat[7] he shal comyn and vesyten hym, and comfordyn hym in his powere. Also, if any broþir or sistir of þis gild dye, he shal have xv messes songyn for his soule. Also, what man or woman of þis gilde be rebel ageyne þe lawe of Holy Chirche, he shal lese[8] þe fraternite of þis gilde tille he come to amendment.

Be it open to ȝow, be þes presentes, þat we, fulliche undirstondend ȝour lettres sent to us, seyend on þis manere, þat we shuld send ȝow a kopy of our statuz, and also þe summe of our katel, we do ȝow openliche to wetyn þat þe summe of our katel is xxi s. viii d., redy to our lord þe kinges wille.

[1] at sea
[2] MS. goodes
[3] dispensation
[4] bury him
[5] at their own expense
[6] bury
[7] but that
[8] lose

TRANSLATIONS

CHAUCER, THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

The *Roman de la Rose*, one of the most celebrated and influential poems of the Middle Ages, is the work of two poets, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, the former writing about 1237, and the latter about 1277. Of the 22,817 lines in Michel's edition (the most accessible), Guillaume wrote 4669, and Jean the remainder. Gaston Paris has characterized Guillaume's part by its use of the dream as a frame; of allegory (the maiden as a rose); of a garden as the scene of the poem; and of personification. Jean de Meun's part is more formless, and makes much parade of learning.

The translation into Middle English consists of 7698 lines. Until about 1868 Chaucer's authorship of the whole of this version was not doubted, especially as Cupid is represented as saying to Chaucer, in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* (B):

> For in pleyn text, withouten nede of glose,
> Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the Rose.

At present three divisions are recognized: 1–1705 (A), 1706–5810 (B), 5811–7698 (C), corresponding respectively to 1–1678, 1679–5875, and 11,444–13,299 of the French (Michel's edition). Nearly all scholars agree that A is by Chaucer, and that B is not; Kaluza believes that C is also by Chaucer, but this view has not been generally accepted.

Through Guillaume de Digulleville, or Guilevile (d. about 1360), the French *Roman* may have had an influence on the *Pilgrim's Progress* (see Hammond, Chaucer, pp. 76–7).

For the French original, see Gaston Paris, *Litt. Fr. au Moyen Age*, chap. 5; Petit de Julleville, *Hist. de la Langue et de la Litt. Fr.* 2. 105–61 (Langlois); Hammond, *Chaucer*, pp. 78–9; where bibliographies may be found. The *Roman* has been translated into English by F. S. Ellis (Temple Classics, 3 vols.). For a bibliography of the English translation, see Hammond, *Chaucer*, pp. 450–4.

The subjoined text is based upon the reprint of the unique manuscript (Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, V. 3. 7) by Kaluza, issued by the Chaucer Society in 1891. Omissions in the manuscript have been supplied from Thynne's edition, and a few emendations have been admitted. The extracts below are, respectively, lines 49–89, 110–43, 349–68. To lines 71–89 of the version I subjoin 67–83 of the French (Michel), for the purpose of comparison.

THE JOYS OF SPRING

That it was May me thought[e] tho,
It is v yere or more ago;
That it was May, thus dremed me,
In tyme of love and jolite,
That al thing gynneth waxen gay,
For ther is neither busk [1] nor hay [2]
In May, that it nyl shrouded [3] bene,
And it with newe leves wrene.[4]
These wodes eek recoveren gr[e]ne,
That drie in wynter ben to sene;
And the erth wexith proude withall,
For swote [5] dewes that on it fall,
And the pore estat forgette
In which that winter had it sette;
And than bycometh the ground so proude
That it wole have a newe shroude,
And makith so queynt his robe and faire
That it hath [6] hewes an hundred payre
Of gras and flouris, ynde [7] and pers,[8]
And many hewes ful dyvers;
[That is the robe I] [9] mene, iwis,
[Through whiche the] ground to preisen [10] is.
[The byrdes, that ha]ven lefte her song,
While thei [han suffr]ide cold so strong
In wedres gryl,[11] and derk to sight,
Ben in May, for the sonne bright,
So glade, that they shewe in syngyng
That in her hertis is sich lykyng
That they mote syngen and be light.
Than doth the nyghtyngale hir myght

1 bush
2 hedge
3 clothed
4 cover
5 sweet
6 MS. had (em. Skeat)
7 dark blue (indigo)
8 sky-blue
9 From Thynne's edition, and so the next lines
10 to be praised, admired
11 disagreeable

To make noyse, and syngen blythe;
Than is blisful, many sithe,
The chela[un]dre[1] and [the] papyngay.[2]
Than yong[e] folk entenden ay
For to ben gay and amorous,
The tyme is than so faverous.[3]
Hard is the hert that loveth nought
In May, whan al this mirth is wrought,
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smale briddes syngen clere
Her blesful swete song pitous.

Li oisel, qui se sunt teü
Tant com il ont le froit eü,
Et le tens divers et frarin,
Sunt en Mai, por le tens serin,
Si lié qu'il monstrent en chantant
Qu'en lor cuer a de joie tant,
Qu'il lor estuet chanter par force.
Li rossignos lores s'esforce
De chanter et de faire noise;
Lors s'esvertue, et lors s'envoise
Li papegaus et la kalandre:
Lors estuet jones gens entendre
A estre gais et amoreus
Por le tens bel et doucereus.
Moult a dur cuer qui en Mai n'aime,
Quant il ot chanter sus la raime
As oisiaus les dous chans piteus.

[1] a kind of lark (a Mediterranean species) [2] parrot, popinjay [3] favorable

THE RIVER AND THE GARD

Toward a ryver gan I me dresse
That I herd renne fast[e] by;
For fairer plaiyng non saugh I
Than playen me by that ryvere,
For from an hill that stood ther ne
Cam doun the streme ful stif and b
Cleer was the water, and as cold
[As any welle is, sot][2]h to seyn;
[And somdele lasse[3]] it was than S
[But it was stray]ghter wel away.
[And never sau]gh I, er that day,
The watir that so wel lyked[4] me;
And wondir glad was I to se
That lusty place, and that ryvere;
And with that watir that ran so cle
My face I wysshe.[5] Tho saugh I w
The botme paved everydell
With gravel, ful of stones shene.[6]
The medewe softe, swote,[7] and gre
Beet[8] right on the watirsyde.
Ful clere was than the morowtyde,[9]
And ful attempre,[10] out of drede.
Tho gan I walk thorough the med
Dounward ay in my pleiyng,
The ryversyde costeiyng.[11]
And whan I had a while goon,
I saugh a gardyn right anoon,
Ful long and brood, and everydell
Enclosed was, and walled well,
With high[e] walles enbatailled,
Portraied without, and wel entailled[12]

1 direct
2 From Thynne, and so next lines
3 smaller
4 pleased
5 washed
6 glistening
7 sweet
8 adjoined (*lit.* beat upon)
9 morning
10 mild
11 coasting,
12 carved

With many riche portraitures;
And bothe the ymages and the peyntures
Gan I biholde bysyly.

THE PICTURE OF OLD AGE

Elde[1] was [i]paynted after this,
That shorter was a foote, iwys,
Than she was wont in her yonghede.[2]
Unneth[3] herselfe she might[e] fede;
So feble and eke so olde was she
That faded was al her beaute.
Ful salowe was waxen hir coloure,
Hir heed for hore[4] was whyte as floure;
Iwys, great qualme[5] ne were it none,
Ne synne, although her lyfe were gone.
Al woxen was her body unwelde,[6]
And drie and dwyned[7] al for elde;
A foule forwelked[8] thyng was she
That whylom rounde and soft had be.
Hir eeres shoken faste withall,
As from her heed they wolde fall.
Her face frounced[9] and forpyned,[10]
And bothe hir hondes lorne,[11] fordwined.[12]
So olde she was that she ne went
A·foote, but it were by potent.[13]

[1] old age
[2] youth
[3] with difficulty
[4] hoariness
[5] evil
[6] unwieldy, impotent
[7] dwindled
[8] withered
[9] wrinkled
[10] wasted away
[11] forlorn
[12] shrunken
[13] crutch

yit armures.[1] For wherto or which woodnesse[2] of enemys wolde first moeven[3] armes, [21–26] whan they seyen cruel woundes, ne none medes[4] be of blood yshad? I wolde that oure tymes sholde torne ayein to the olde maneres! But the anguissous[5] love of havinge brenneth in folk more cruely than the fyr of the mountaigne Ethna, *that ay brenneth.* [27–30] Allas! what was he that first dalf[6] up the gobetes[7] or the weightes of gold covered under erthe, and the precious stones that wolden han ben hid? He dalf up precious perils. *That is to seyn, that he that hem first up dalf, he dalf up a precious peril; forwhy[8] for the preciousnesse of swiche thinge hath many man ben in peril.*

[*Prose*] But what shal I seye of dignitees and of powers, the whiche ye men, that neither knowen verray[9] dignitee ne verray power, areysen[10] hem as heye as the hevene? The whiche dignitees and powers, yif they comen to any wikked man, they don as grete damages and destrucc
iouns as doth the flaumbe[11] of the mountaigne Ethna, whan the flaumbe walweth[12] up; ne no deluge ne doth so cruel harmes.

Felix nimium prior ætas,
Contenta fidelibus arvis
Nec inerti perdita luxu,
Facili quæ sera solebat
Jejunia solvere glande.
Non Bacchica munera norant
Liquido confundere melle,
Nec lucida vellera Serum
Tyrio miscere veneno.
Somnos dabat herba salubres,
Potum quoque lubricus amnis,
Umbras altissima pinus.
Nondum maris alta secabat,
Nec mercibus undique lectis
Nova litora viderat hospes.

1 armor
2 madness, rage
3 stir up
4 rewards
5 tormenting
6 dug
7 lumps
8 wherefore
9 true
10 exalt
11 flame
12 rolls, tosses

Tunc classica sæva tacebant,
Odiis neque fusus acerbis
Cruor horrida tinxerat arva.
Quid enim furor hosticus ulla
Vellet prior arma movere,
Cum vulnera sæva viderent,
Nec præmia sanguinis ulla?
Utinam modo nostra redirent
In mores tempora priscos!
Sed, sævior ignibus Ætnæ,
Fervens amor ardet habendi.
Heu! primus quis fuit ille
Auri qui pondera tecti,
Gemmasque latere volentes,
Pretiosa pericula, fodit?

Quid autem de dignitatibus potentiaque disseram qua vos veræ dignitatis ac potestatis inscii cælo exæquatis? Quæ si in improbissimum quemque ceciderunt quæ flammis Ætnæ eructuantibus, quod diluvium tantas strages dederint?

Trēowa wæstmas hī ǣton and wyrta; nalles scīr wīn hī ne druncon, nē nanne wǣtan hī ne cūþon wið hunige mengan, nē seolocenra hrægla mid mistlicum blēowum hī ne gīmdon. Ealne weg hī slēpon ūte on trīowa sceadum; hlūterra wella wæter hī druncon. Ne geseah nān cēpa ēaland ne weroð, nē gehērde nōn mon þā gēt nānne sciphere.

And hī ǣne on dæge ǣton symle
On ǣfentīd eorþan wæstmas,
Wudes and wyrta; nalles wīn druncon
Scīr of stēape. Næs þā scealca nān
Þe mete oððe drinc mængan cūðe,
Wæter wið hunige, nē heora wǣda þon mā
Sioloce sīowian, nē hī siarocræftum
Godweb giredon, nē hī gimreced
Setton searolīce, ac hī simle him
Eallum tīdum ūte slēpon

Under bēamsceade; druncon burnan wæter,
Calde wellan. Nǣnig cēpa ne seah
Ofer ēargeblond ellendne wearod,
Nē hūru ymbe sciphergas sǣtilcas ne hērdon.

THE FORMER AGE

A blysful lyf, a paysyble and a swete,
Ledden the poeples in the former age;
They helde hem paied[1] of fructes[2] þat þey ete,
Whiche þat the feldes yave hem by usage[3];
They ne weere nat forpampred[4] with owtrage.[5]
Onknowyn was þe quyerne[6] and ek the melle[7];
They eten mast, hawes, and swych pownage,[8]
And dronken water of the colde welle.

Yit nas the grownd nat wownded with þe plowh,
But corn upsprong, unsowe of mannes hond,
Þe which they gnodded,[9] and eete nat half inowh.
No man yit knewe the forwes[10] of his lond;
No man the fyr owt of the flynt yit fonde;
Unkorven[11] and ungrobbed[12] lay the vyne;
No man yit in the morter spices grond,
To[13] clarre ne to sawse of galentyne.[14]

No madyr,[15] welde,[16] or wod[17] no litestere[18]
Ne knewh; the fles[19] was of [h]is former hewe;
No flessh ne wyste offence of egge[20] or spere;
No coyn ne knewh man which was[21] fals or trewe;

1 satisfied
2 MS. the fructes
3 customarily, regularly
4 pampered
5 excess
6 hand-mill
7 mill
8 swine's food
9 rubbed, bruised; cf. *Rom. Rose* 9124 (the whole passage seems imitated from Boethius): 'Et des espis des blés frotoient'
10 furrows
11 unpruned
12 not digged round
13 for
14 a mixture of ginger, grated bread, vinegar, etc.
15 madder
16 dyeweed, yellowweed
17 woad
18 dyer
19 fleece
20 edge
21 MS. is

No ship yit karf the wawes grene and blewe;
No marchaunt yit ne fette owtlandissh ware;
No trompes[1] for the werres folk ne knewe,
Ne towres heye, and walles rownde or square.

What sholde it han avayled to werreye[2]?
Ther lay no profyt, ther was no rychesse;
But corsed was the tyme, I dar wel seye,
Þat men fyrst dede hir swety bysynesse
To grobbe up metal, lurkynge in derknesse,[3]
And in þe ryverys fyrst[e] gemmys sowhte.
Allas! than sprong up al the cursydnesse
Of coveytyse, þat fyrst owr sorwe browhte.

WYCLIFFITE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

The extracts here given are from the second Wycliffite version of the Vulgate (ca. 1388), which is not so awkwardly literal as the earlier (ca. 1380). An interesting study of the Wycliffite Epistle to the Romans, compared with the Latin and another (fragmentary) Middle English rendering, has been published by Dr. Emma C. Tucker (*Yale Studies in English*, No. 49).

JOB 41.20–28; 42.4–25

Whether thou schalt mowe drawe out levyathan with an hook, and schalt bynde with a roop his tunge? Whethir thou schalt putte a ryng in hise nosethirlis, ethir schalt perse hyse cheke with an hook? Whether he schal multiplie preieris to thee, ether schal speke softe thingis to thee? Whether he schal make covenaunt with thee, and thou schalt take him a servaunt everlastinge? Whether thou schalt scorne hym as a brid, ethir schalt bynde hym to thin handmaidis? Schulen frendis kerve hym? schulen marchauntis departe hym? Whether thou schalt fille nettis with his skyn, and a leep[4] of fischis with his heed? Schalt thou putte thin hond on hym? have thou mynde of the batel, and adde no more to speke. Lo, his hope schal disseyve hym; and in the siȝt of alle men he schal be cast doun. . . .

[1] MS. batails trompes [2] fight [3] MS. dirkenesse [4] basket

Who schal schewe the face of his clothing, and who schal entre into the myddis of his mouth? Who schal opene the ȝatis of his cheer[1]? ferdfulnesse[2] is bi the cumpas of hise teeth. His bodi is as ȝotun[3] scheldys of bras, and joyned togidere with scalis overleiynge hemsilf.[4] Oon is joyned to another, and sotheli brething goith not thorouȝ tho.[5] Oon schal cleve to anothir, and tho holdynge hemsilf schulen not be departid.[6] His fnesynge[7] is as schynynge of fier, and hise iȝen[8] ben as iȝelidis of the morewtid.[9] Laumpis comen forth of his mouth, as trees[10] of fier that ben kyndlid. Smoke cometh forth of hise nosethirlis, as of a pot set on the fier and boilynge. His breeth maketh colis to brenne, and flawme goith out of his mouth. Strengthe schal dwelle in his necke, and nedynesse[11] schal go bifor his face. The membris of hise fleischis ben clevynge togidere to hemsilf; God schal sende floodis[12] aȝens hym, and tho schulen not be borun to another place. His herte schal be maad hard as a stoon; and it schal be streyned[13] togidere as the anefeld[14] of a smith. Whanne he schal be takun awei, aungels schulen drede; and thei, aferd, schulen be purgid.[15] Whanne swerd takith hym, it may not stonde, nethir spere, nether haburjoun.[16] For he schal arette irun as chaffis, and bras as rotun tre. A man archere schal not dryve hym awei; stoonys of a slynge ben turned into stobil to hym. He schal arette[17] an hamer as stobil,[18] and he schal scorne a florischynge[19] spere. The beemys of the sunne schulen be undur hym; and he schal strewe to hymsilf gold as cley. He schal make the depe se to buyle as a pot; and he schal putte[20] as whanne oynementis buylen. A path schal schyne aftir hym; he schal gesse[21] the greet occian as wexynge eld. No power is on erthe that schal be comparisound to hym, which is maad that he schulde drede noon. He seeth al hiȝ thing; he is kyng over alle the sones of pride.

1 face
2 terror
3 molten
4 one another
5 them
6 separated
7 sneezing
8 eyes
9 morning
10 torches
11 want, poverty
12 Lat. *fulmina*, read as *flumina*
13 compacted
14 anvil
15 purified
16 breastplate
17 esteem
18 stubble
19 brandishing, waving
20 regard (it)
21 esteem

JOHN 17. 1–6

These thingis Jesus spak, and whanne he hadde cast up hise iȝen into hevene, he seide: 'Fadir, the our cometh; clarifie[1] thi sone, that thi sone clarifie thee; as thou hast ȝovun to hym power on ech fleisch, that al thing that thou hast ȝovun to hym, he ȝyve to hem everlastynge liif. And this is everlastynge liif, that thei knowe thee very God aloone, and whom thou hast sent, Jesu Crist. Y have clarified thee on the erthe; Y have endid the werk that thou hast ȝovun to me to do. And now, Fadir, clarifie thou me at[2] thisilf, with the clerenesse[3] that Y hadde at thee bifor the world was maad. Y have schewid thi name to tho men whiche thou hast ȝovun to me of the world; thei weren thine, and thou hast ȝovun hem to me, and thei han kept thi word.

REVELATION 14

And Y sai, and lo! a Lomb stood on the mount of Sion, and with hym an hundrid thousynde and foure and fourti thousynde, havynge his name, and the name of his Fadir, writun in her forhedis. And Y herde a vois fro hevene, as the vois of many watris, and as the vois of a greet thundur; and the vois which is herd was as of many harperis harpinge in her harpis; and thei sungun as a newe song bifor the seete[4] of God, and bifore the foure beestis and senyouris; and no man miȝte seie the song but thei, an hundrid thousynde and

[1] glorify [2] with; Lat. *apud* [3] glory [4] throne

1. thingis: cf. the Old English of verses 1–3:

Ðās þing se Hǣlend spræc, and āhōf ūpp his ēagan tō heofenum, and cwæð: 'Fæder, tīd ys cumen; geswutela þīnne Sunu, þæt þīn Sunu geswutelige þē; and swā þū him sealdest anweald ǣlces mannes, þæt he sylle ēce līf eallum þām þe þū him sealdest. Ðis ys sōþlice ēce līf, þæt hī oncnāwon þæt þū eart ān sōþ God, and se þe þū sendest, Hǣlynde Crīst.'

Tyndale has:

These wordes spake Jesus, and lifte uppe his eyes to heven, and sayde: 'Father, the houre is come; glorify thy Sonne, that thy Sonne maye glorify the; as thou hast geven hym power over all fleshe, that he shulde geve eternall life to as many as thou hast geven him. This is life eternall, that they myght knowe the, that only very God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.'

foure and fourti thousynde, that ben bouȝt fro the erthe. These it ben that ben not defoulid with wymmen, for thei ben virgyns. These suen the Lomb whidir ever he schal go. These ben bouȝt of alle men, the firste fruytis to God and to the Lomb; and in the mouth of hem lesyng[1] is not foundun, for thei ben without wem[2] bifor the trone of God. And Y say another aungel, fliynge bi the myddil of hevene, havynge an everlastinge gospel that he schulde preche to men sittynge on erthe, and on ech folk, and lynage, and langage, and puple; and seide with a greet vois: 'Drede ȝe the Lord, and ȝyve ȝe to hym onour, for the our of his dom cometh; and worschipe ȝe hym that made hevene and erthe, the see, and alle thingis that ben in hem, and the wellis of watris.' And anothir aungel suede,[3] seiynge: 'Thilke greet Babiloyne fel doun, fel doun, which ȝaf drinke to alle folkis of the wyn of wraththe of her fornycacioun.' And the thridde aungel suede hem, and seide with a greet vois: 'If ony man worschipe the beeste and the ymage of it, and takith the carecter[4] in his forheed, ether in his hoond, this schal drynke of the wyn of Goddis wraththe, that is meynd[5] with clere wyn in the cuppe of his wraththe, and schal be turmentid with fier and brymston, in the siȝt of hooli aungels, and bifore the siȝt of the Lomb; and the smoke of her turmentis schal stie[6] up into the worldis of worldis; nether thei han reste dai and niȝt, whiche worschipiden the beeste and his ymage, and yf ony man take the carect of his name. Here is the pacience of seyntis, whiche kepen the maundementis of God, and the feith of Jesu.' And Y herde a vois fro hevene seiynge to me: 'Write thou, Blessid ben deed men that dien in the Lord; fro hennus forth now the Spirit seith that thei reste of her traveilis; for the werkis of hem suen hem.' And Y say,[7] and lo a white cloude, and above the cloude a sittere, liik the Sone of man, havynge in his heed a goldun coroun, and in his hond a scharp sikil. And another aungel wente out of the temple, and criede with greet vois to hym that sat on the cloude: 'Sende thi sikil, and repe, for the our cometh that it be ropun; for the corn of the erthe is ripe.' And he that sat on the cloude sente his sikil into the erthe, and rap the erthe. And another aungel wente out of the temple that is in

1 falsehood
2 blemish
3 followed
4 mark
5 mingled
6 rise
7 looked

hevene, and he also hadde a scharp sikile. And another aungel wente out fro the auter, that hadde power on fier and water; and he criede with a greet vois to hym that hadde the scharp sikil, and seide: 'Sende thi scharp sikil, and kitte awei the clustris of the vynȝerd of the erthe, for the grapis of it ben ripe.' And the aungel sente his sikil into the erthe, and gaderide grapis of the vynȝerd of the erthe, and sente into the greet lake of Goddis wraththe. And the lake was troddun without the citee, and the bloode wente out of the lake til to the bridels of horsis, bi furlongis a thousynd and six hundrid.

VERSIONS OF PSALM 51. 1–3

LATIN

Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam; et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam. Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea, et a peccato meo munda me. Quoniam iniquitatem meam cognosco, et peccatum meum contra me est semper.

ABOUT 1200

Vices and Virtues, in Smyth, *Biblical Quotations in Middle English Literature* (*Yale Studies in English*, No. 41), p. 42.

Hlaverd, . . . after-ðat-ðe ðin mildce ys michel, have ore of mine michele senne; and after ðine manifealde mildces ðe ðu hafst ihafd to mankenne, Hlaverd, do awei fram me ðese michele unrihtwisnesse.

A.D. 1300–1350

Bülbring, *Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter*, p. 60

Ha mercy on me, God, efter þy mychel mercy; and efter þe mychelnes of þy pites do way my wickednes. Whasshe me more of my wickednes, and clense me of myn synne. For ich knowe my wickednes, and my synne ys evermore oȝains me.

A.D. 1350-1400

Horstmann, *Richard Rolle*, pp. 182-3

God, þou have mercy of me,
After mikel mercy of þe;
And after of þi reuþes þe mikelnes
Þou do awai mi wickednes.
Nou mare me wasche of min ivel bidene,
And of mi sinne þou klens me klene.
For mi wicke[d]nes I knaw þat I am inne,
And ai ogain me es mi sinne.

ABOUT 1388

Wycliffe

God, have thou merci on me, bi thi greet merci; and bi the mychilnes of thi merciful doyngis do thou awei my wickidnesse. More waische thou me fro my wickidnesse, and clense thou me fro my synne. For Y knouleche my wickidnesse, and my synne is evere aȝeyns me.

ABOUT 1460

Political, Religious, and Love Songs (reprint of E.E.T.S. 15), pp. 279-80

Mercy, God, of my mysdede,
  For þi mercy þat mychel ys;
Lat þi pite sprynge and sprede,
  Off þi mercy þat I ne mys.
After gostly grace I grede[1];
  Good God, þou graunt me þis,
Þat I may lyve in love and drede,
  And never after do[2] more amys.

And after þi mercies þat ben fele,[3]
  Lord, fordo my wickydnesse;

[1] cry MS. to do [3] many

Ȝyve me grace to hyde and hele
The blame of my bruchelnesse.
Ȝif any sterynge[1] on me stele
Out of þe clos of þi clennesse,
Wysse me, Lord, in wo and weele,
And kepe me fram unkyndnesse.

Moreover, wasche me of my synne,
And of my gultes clanse þow me;
And serche my soule without and inne,
That I no more defowlid be.
And as þyn hert aclef atwynne[2]
With doleful deth on þe rode-tre,
Late me never no werke bigynne,
Lord, but-ȝif[3] it lyke þee.

For al my wickidnesse I knowe,
And my synne is ever me aȝeyn;
Therfore late þi grace growe,
Jesu, þat was with Jewis sleyn.
Ryche and pore, hye and lowe,
Smale and gret[e], in certeyn,
Atte Domesdaie, when þou schalt blowe,
Of þi mercy schul be ful feyn.

A.D. 1535

Coverdale

Have mercy upon me (O God), after thy goodnes; and acordinge unto thy greate mercies do awaye myne offences. Wash me well fro my wickednesse, and clense me fro my synne. For I knowlege my fautes, and my synne is ever before me.

[1] guidance (?); stirring (?) [2] burst in twain [3] unless

A.D. 1560

Geneva Version

Have mercie upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindenes; according to the multitude of thy compassions put awaie mine iniquities. Wash me throughly from mine iniquitie, and clense me from my sinne. For I knowe mine iniquities, and my sinne is ever before me.

A.D. 1611

Authorized Version

Have mercie upon mee, O God, according to thy loving kindnesse; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash mee throughly from mine iniquitie, and clense me from my sinne. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sinne is ever before mee.

LYRICS

CUCKOO SONG

About 1240 (*New Eng. Dict.*). From MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 978, where i accompanied by the music. The author of this rondel, rota, or round, n perhaps have been John of Fornsete, a monk of the abbey of Reading. T melody is of considerable importance in the history of English music. Sob musical critics have spoken of 'this amazing production,' of its 'ingenuity ar beauty,' of 'the airy and pastoral correspondence between the words and th music.' See Grove's *Dict. Music*, 2d ed., 4.745–54 (cf. 3.750–1, 765); *Oxfor Hist. Music* 1.326–38 (Wooldridge); *Trans. Phil. Soc.* for 1868, p. 103 E.E.T.S. 7.419–28. There are facsimiles in Grove (4.748), Chappell, *Pop Music of the Olden Time*, and the facsimiles of the Palæographical Society, Part 8, Pl. 125.

Sing, cuccu, nu[1]*! Sing, cuccu!*
Sing, cuccu! Sing, cuccu, nu!

Sumer is icumen in;
Lhude[2] sing, cuccu!
Groweþ sed, and bloweþ[3] med,[4]
And springþ þe wde[5] nu.
Sing, cuccu!
Awe[6] bleteþ after lomb,
Lhouþ[7] after calve cu;
Bulluc sterteþ,[8] bucke verteþ[9];
Murie[10] sing, cuccu!
Cuccu! cuccu!
Wel singes þu, cuccu;
Ne swik[11] þu naver[12] nu.

[1] now
[2] loudly
[3] blooms
[4] mead, meadow
[5] wood
[6] ewe
[7] lows
[8] bounds, frisks (cf. Chaucer, *K.T.* 644: 'a courser, *sterting* as the fyr')
[9] *pedit* (L
[10] merrily
[11] cease
[12] never

SPRING

About 1310. From Böddeker, *Altenglische Dichtungen des MS. Harl. 2253*, pp. 164–5.

Lenten ys come wiþ love to toune,[1]
Wiþ blosmen and wiþ briddes roune,[2]
Þat al þis blisse bryngeþ;
Dayeseȝes[3] in þis[4] dales,
Notes suete of nyhtegales;
Uch foul song singeþ.
The þrestelcoc him þreteþ[5] oo[6];
Away is huere[7] wynter woo,
When woderove[8] springeþ.
Þis foules singeþ ferly fele,[9]
Ant wlyteþ[10] on huere wynter wele,[11]
Þat al þe wode ryngeþ.

Þe rose rayleþ[12] hire rode[13];
The leves on þe lyhte[14] wode
Waxen al wiþ wille.[15]
Þe mone mandeþ[16] hire bleo[17];
Þe lilie is lossom[18] to seo,
Þe fenyl[19] and þe fille.[20]
Wowes[21] þis wilde drakes;
Miles[22] murgeþ[23] huere makes,[24]
Ase strem þat strikeþ[25] stille.
Mody[26] meneþ,[27] so doþ[28] mo[29];
Ichot Ycham[30] on of þo,
For love þat likes ille.[31]

1 spring has made its appearance, with love
2 song
3 daisies
4 these
5 disputes with himself (?)
6 ever
7 their
8 woodruff
9 wonderfully much
10 look back
11 winter's well-being (ironical?)
12 puts on (as a garment)
13 ruddiness
14 fluttering, trembling (transferred epithet, belonging properly to 'leves')
15 eagerly
16 sends forth
17 color
18 lovely
19 fennel
20 chervil
21 woo
22 animals (so Mätzner)
23 delight
24 mates
25 flows
26 disconsolate ones? (cf. Shakespeare, *King John* 4. 1. 15–16)
27 lament
28 MS. doh
29 others
30 I know I am
31 annoys, vexes

Þe mone mandeþ hire lyht;
So doþ þe semly [1] sonne bryht,
When briddes singeþ breme.[2]
Deawes donkeþ [3] þe dounes;
Deores [4] w[r]iþ [5] huere derne rounes,
Domes for te deme [7];
Wormes woweþ under cloude [8];
Wymmen waxeþ wounder proude,
So wel hit wol hem seme.[9]
Ȝef me shal wonte wille of on,[10]
Þis worldes [11] weole [12] Y wole forgon,[13]
Ant wyht [14] in wode [15] be fleme.[16]

WHEN THE NIGHTINGALE SINGS

About 1310. From Böddeker, p. 174

When þe nyhtegale singes,
Þe wodes waxen grene,
Lef ant gras ant blosme springes
In Averyl, Y wene;
Ant love is to myn herte gon
Wiþ one [17] spere so kene,
Nyht ant day my blod hit drynkes,
Myn herte deþ to [18] tene.[19]

Ich have loved al þis ȝer,
Þat Y may love na more;
Ich have siked [20] moni syk,
Lemmon,[21] for þin ore [22];

[1] goodly
[2] gaily
[3] wet
[4] animals
[5] divulge; cf. Chaucer, *Compl. Mars* 91; *T. and C.* 2.537
[6] their secret communings
[7] sentiments to express
[8] clod
[9] beseem, become
[10] if I shall fail to have my will of one
[11] MS. wunne
[12] weal
[13] forego
[14] bold (?)
[15] forest
[16] fugitive
[17] a
[18] Wright (*Spec. L*..., p. 92), me
[19] distress, anguish
[20] sighed
[21] sweetheart
[22] favor, grace

Me nis love never þe ner,[1]
Ant þat me reweþ sore;
Suete lemmon, þench on me,
Ich have loved þe ȝore.[2]

Suete lemmon, Y preye þee
Of love one speche;
Whil Y lyve in world so wyde
Oþer nulle[3] Y seche.
Wiþ þy love, my suete leof,[4]
My blis þou mihtes eche[5];
A suete cos[6] of þy mouth
Mihte be my leche.[7]

Suete lemmon, Y preȝe þee
Of a love-bene[8]:
Ȝef þou me lovest, ase men says,
Lemmon, as I wene,
Ant ȝef hit þi wille be,
Þou loke þat hit be sene;
So muchel Y þenke upon þe
Þat al Y waxe grene.[9]

Bituene Lyncolne ant Lyndeseye,[10]
Norhamptoun ant Lounde,[11]
Ne wot I non so fayr a may,
As I go fore ybounde.[12]
Suete lemmon, Y preȝe þe
Þou lovie me a stounde[13];
Y wole mone my song
On wham hit ys ylong.[14]

1 nearer
2 long
3 will not
4 dear
5 augment
6 kiss
7 healing
8 love-boon
9 pale
10 Lindsey in Suffolk, about 100 miles from Lincoln
11 London, about 57 miles from Northampton
12 as I go in bondage for
13 for a time
14 to whom it belongs; MS. on wham þat hit ys on ylong

ALISON

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 147–8. Translation in Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 308–9.

An hendy hap Ichabbe yhent[1];
Ichot[2] *from hevene it is me sent;*
From alle wymmen mi love is lent,[3]
And lyht[4] *on Alysoun.*

Bytuene Mersh and Averil,
When spray biginneþ to springe,
Þe lutel foul haþ hire wyl
On hyre lud[5] to synge.
Ich libbe in love-longinge
For semlokest[6] of alle þinge;
He[7] may me blisse bringe —
Icham in hire baundoun.[8]

On[9] heu hire her[10] is fayr ynoh,
Hire browe broune, hire eȝe blake;
Wiþ lossum chere[11] he on me loh[12];
Wiþ middel[13] smal and wel ymake.[14]
Bote[15] he me wolle to hire take,
For te buen[16] hire owen make,[17]
Longe to lyven Ichulle[18] forsake,
And feye[19] fallen adoun.

Nihtes when Y wende[20] and wake,
Forþi[21] myn wonges[22] waxeþ won;
Levedi, al for þine sake
Longinge is ylent me on.[23]

[1] I have won a fair fate
[2] I know
[3] turned
[4] has lighted
[5] language
[6] comeliest, goodliest
[7] she
[8] power
[9] in
[10] hair
[11] loving mien
[12] laughed
[13] waist
[14] made
[15] unless
[16] be
[17] mate
[18] I shall
[19] death-stricken
[20] wander
[21] on this account
[22] cheeks
[23] appointed to me

1–4: refrain to each stanza.

In world nis non so wyter[1] mon
Þat al hire bounte telle con.
Hire swyre[2] is whittore þen þe swon,
And feyrest may[3] in toune.

Icham for wowyng[4] al forwake,[5]
Wery so[6] water in wore.[7]
Lest eny reve[8] me my make,
Ychabbe yȝerned[9] ȝore.[10]
Betere is þolien whyle sore[11]
Þen mournen evermore.
Geynest[12] under gore,[13]
Herkne to my roun.[14]

CHAUCER, BIRD-SONG

Roundel, from the *Parliament of Birds* (about 1382?)

Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders[15] overshake,[16]
And driven awey the longe nightes blake!

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy onlofte,[17]
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake:
Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders overshake.

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make;
Ful blisful may they singen whan they wake:
Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders overshake,
And driven awey the longe nightes blake!

1 wise
2 neck
3 maid
4 yearning
5 overwatched
6 as
7 weir (?)
8 rob
9 yearned
10 long
11 to suffer sorely for a time
12 loveliest
13 in body (*lit.* under gore, i.e. under garment)
14 lay, song
15 storms
16 dispelled
17 aloft

BLOW, NORTHERN WIND

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 168–71

Blow, northerne wynd,
Send[1] *þou me my suetyng!*
Blow, norþerne wynd,
Blou! blou! blou!

Ichot[2] a burde[3] in boure bryht,
Þat fully semly is on syht,[4]
Menskful[5] maiden of myht,
Feir ant fre[6] to fonde[7];
In al þis wurhliche won,[8]
A burde of blod and of bon
Never ȝete Y nuste[9] non
Lussomore[10] in londe.

Wiþ lokkes lefliche[11] and longe,
Wiþ frount[12] and face feir to fonde,
Wiþ murþes monie mote heo monge,[13]
Þat brid[14] so breme[15] in boure;
Wiþ lossom eye, grete ant gode,
Wiþ browen blysfol under hode[16];
He þat reste him on þe rode[17]
Þat leflich lyf honoure!

[1] MS. sent
[2] I know
[3] lady
[4] to behold
[5] worshipful
[6] charming
[7] test, make proof of
[8] noble dwelling (the world?)
[9] knew
[10] more enchanting
[11] lovely
[12] forehead
[13] bargain, traffic (?)
[14] maiden
[15] blithe, gay
[16] hood
[17] Christ

1–4: refrain to each stanza.
14. fonde: assonance, not rhyme.

Hire lure[1] lumes[2] liht
Ase a launterne a[3] nyht,
Hire bleo[4] blykyeþ[5] so bryht;
So feyr heo is ant fyn!
A suetly[6] suyre[7] heo haþ to holde,
Wiþ armes, shuldre, ase mon wolde,
Ant fyngres feyre forte folde[8];
God wolde hue were myn!

Middel heo haþ menskful[9] smal;
Hire loveliche chere[10] as cristal;
Þeȝes,[11] legges, fet, ant al,
Ywraht[12] is[13] of þe beste.
A lussum ledy lasteles[14]
Þat sweting is, and ever wes;
A betere burde never nes
Yheryed[15] wiþ þe heste.[16]

Heo is dereworþe[17] in day,
Graciouse, stout,[18] and gay,
Gentil, jolyf[19] so[20] þe jay,
Worhliche[21] when heo wakeþ.
Maiden murgest[22] of mouþ;
Bi est, bi west, by norþ and souþ,
Þer nis fi[þ]ele[23] ne crouþ[24]
Þat[25] such murþes makeþ.

1 face
2 shines
3 at
4 hue
5 gleams
6 sweet
7 neck
8 clasp
9 delightfully
10 countenance
11 thighs
12 fashioned
13 MS. wes
14 faultless, perfect
15 praised
16 highest
17 precious
18 stately
19 lively
20 as
21 noble
22 merriest
23 fiddle; em. B.
24 crowd, rote
25 MS. sat (em. B.)

Heo is coral of godnesse,
Heo is rubie of ryhtfulnesse,[1]
Heo is cristal of clannesse,[2]
Ant baner of bealte[3];
Heo is lilie of largesse,[4]
Heo is paruenke[5] of prouesse,
Heo is selsecle[6] of suetnesse,
Ant ledy of lealte.[7] . . .

For hire love Y carke ant care,
For hire love Y droupne[8] ant dare,[9]
For hire love my blisse is bare,
Ant al Ich waxe won[10];
For hire love in slep Y slake,[11]
For hire love al nyht Ich wake,
For hire love mournyng Y make
More þen eny mon.

LONGING

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 149–50

Wiþ longyng Y am lad,[12]
On molde[13] Y waxe mad,
A maide marreþ me;
Y grede,[14] Y grone, unglad,
For selden Y am sad[15]
Þat semly forte se.
Levedi, þou rewe me!
To rouþe[16] þou havest me rad[17];
Be bote[18] of þat Y bad,[19]
My lyf is long[20] on þe.

1 righteousness
2 purity
3 beauty
4 generosity
5 periwinkle
6 heliotrope
7 loyalty
8 droop
9 falter
10 turn pale
11 grow weak
12 led
13 earth
14 cry
15 satiated
16 sorrow
17 guided, brought
18 recompense
19 (have) endured
20 depends

Levedy of alle londe,
Les[1] me out of bonde;
Broht Ich am in wo;
Have resting[2] on honde,
And send[3] þou me þi sonde[4]
Sone, er þou me slo[5] —
My reste is wiþ þe ro.[6]
Þah men to me han onde,[7]
To love nul y noht wonde,[8]
Ne lete[9] for non of þo.[10]

Levedi, wiþ al my miht,
My love is on þe liht,[11]
To menske[12] þe when Y may;
Þou rew and red[13] me ryht;
To deþe þou havest me diht,[14]
Y deȝe longe er my day;
Þou leve[15] upon mi lay.
Treuþe Ichave þe plyht,
To don þat Ich have hyht[16]
Whil mi lif leste may.

Lylie-whyt hue[17] is,
Hire rode[18] so rose on rys[19];
Þat reveþ[20] me mi rest.
Wymmon war[21] and wys,
Of prude[22] hue bereþ þe pris,
Burde on of þe best.
Þis wommon woneþ by west,

1 loose
2 relief, assuagement
3 MS. sent
4 message
5 slay
6 roe (a type of restlessness; cf. Virgil, *Æn.* 4. 69 ff.)
7 jealousy
8 will I not cease
9 leave off
10 them
11 alighted
12 honor
13 guide
14 appointed
15 believe (imp.)
16 promised
17 she
18 complexion
19 spray
20 deprives
21 prudent
22 splendor

Brihtest under bys[1];
Hevene Y tolde[2] al his
  Þat o[3] nyht were hire gest.[4]

NOW WOULD I FAIN

About 1445. Our text is on the basis of MS. Camb. Univ. Lib. Ff. 1.6, 'written about the time of Hen. VI,' with emendations from MS. Bodl. Ashm. 191, but with spellings conformed to the Cambridge manuscript. The latter is reproduced from Halliwell's print in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* 1.25; Ashmole 191 is printed in Stainer and Nicholson, *Early Bodleian Music* 2.66 (facsimile in Vol. 1, Pl. XXX).

Now wold I fayne some myrthis make
All oneli for my ladys sake,
  When I hir se[5];
But now I am so ferre from hir,
  Hit will nat be.

Thogh I be long out of hir[6] sight,
I am hir[6] man both day and night,
  And so will be;
Wherfor wold God as I love hir
  That she lovid me!

When she is mery, then am I glad;
When she is sory, then[7] am I sad;
  And cause whi —
For he livith nat that lovith hir
  So[8] well as I.

She sayth that she hath seen hit wreten
That 'seldyn seen is soon foryeten[9]';
  Hit is nat so;
For, in good feith, save *oneli* hir,
  I love no moo.

[1] byssus, fine linen
[2] should consider
[3] one
[4] guest
[5] MS. and hit wold be (Ashm.)
[6] MS. your (Ashm.)
[7] MS. than
[8] MS. as (Ashm.)
[9] forgot 425 23

Wherfor I pray, both night and day,
That she may cast [all][1] care away,
And leve[2] in rest;
And evermore, wherever[3] she be,
To love me[4] best;

And I to hir for to be trew,
And never chaung[e] her for no[5] new
Unto myne end;
And that I may in hir servise
For evyr amend.[6]

CHAUCER, MERCILESS BEAUTY

The first of a sequence of three roundels. From MS. Camb. Magd. Coll. Pepys 2006. See Skeat, *Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* 1.80–1, 387; Hammond, *Chaucer*, pp. 436–7.

Youre yën two[7] woole sle me sodenly,
I may the beaute of them not sustene,
So wondeth[8] it thorowout my herte kene.

And but your word wille helen hastily
Mi hertis wound[e],[9] while that it is grene,
Youre yën two wolle sle me sodenly,
I may the beaute of them not sustene.

Upon my trouth I sey yow feithfully
That ye ben of my liffe and deth the quene;
For with my deth the trouth shal be [y]sene.[10]
Youre yën two wolle sle me sodenly,
I may the beaute of them not sustene,
So wondeth it thorowout my herte kene.

1 (Ashm.)
2 live
3 MS. whersoever (Ashm.)
4 MS. hir (Ashm.)
5 MS. noon (Ashm.)
6 improve
7 MS. two yen (em. S.)
8 wounds
9 em. S.
10 Morris (*Aldine Chaucer*), isene

DEBATE OF THE CLERIC AND THE MAIDEN

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 172–3. Cf. below, p. 476

'My deþ Y love, my lyf Ich hate,
For a levedy shene[1];
Heo is briht[2] so[3] daies liht,
Þat is on me wel sene.
Al Y falewe[4] so doþ þe lef,
In somer when hit is grene;
Ȝef[5] mi þoht[6] helpeþ me noht,
To wham shal Y me mene[7]?

Sorewe and syke[8] and drery mod[9]
Byndeþ me so faste
Þat Y wene to walke wod,[10]
Ȝef hit me lengore laste;
My serewe, my care, al wiþ a word
He[11] myhte awey caste;
Whet helpeþ þe, my suete lemmon,
My lyf þus forte gaste[12]?'

'Do wey, þou clerc, þou art a fol,
Wiþ þe bydde[13] Y noht chyde;
Shalt þou never lyve þat day
Mi love þat þou shalt byde.[14]
Ȝef þou in my boure art take,
Shame þe may bityde;
Þe is bettere on fote gon
Þen wycked hors to ryde.'

[1] fair
[2] MS. brith (em. B.)
[3] as
[4] wither, fade
[5] if
[6] pondering
[7] bemoan myself
[8] sighing
[9] temper, state of mind
[10] insane
[11] she
[12] ruin
[13] must
[14] experience

'Weylawei! whi seist þou so?
Þou rewe on me, þy man;
Þou art ever in my þoht
In londe wher Ich am.
Ȝef Y deȝe for þi love,
Hit is þe mykel sham;
Þou lete me lyve, and be þi luef,
And þou my suete lemman.'

'Be stille, þou fol—Y calle þe riht[1]!
Co[n]st þou never blynne[2]?
Þou art wayted[3] day and nyht
Wiþ[4] fader and al my kynne;
Be þou in mi bour ytake,
Lete þey[5] for no synne[6]
Me to holde, and þe to slou[7];
Þe deþ so þou maht[8] wynne!'

'Suete lady, þou wend[9] þi mod;
Sorewe þou wolt me kyþe[10];
Ich am al so[11] sory[12] mon,
So Ich was whylen[13] blyþe—
In a wyndou þer[14] we stod,
We custe us[15] fyfty syþe.[16]
Feir biheste[17] makeþ mony mon
Al is[18] serewes mythe.[19]'

'Weylawey! whi seist þou so?
Mi serewe þou makest newe;
Y lovede a clerk al paramours[20]—
Of love he wes ful trewe;

1 MS. riþt (em. B.)
2 stop
3 watched, spied upon
4 by
5 they will fail not
6 because of any sin involved
7 slay
8 mayst
9 change
10 show, inflict upon
11 just as
12 unhappy
13 formerly
14 where
15 kissed each other
16 times
17 promise
18 his
19 lose
20 passionately

He nes nout blyþe never a day,
Bote[1] he me sone[2] seȝe[3];
Ich lovede him betere þen my lyf—
Whet bote[4] is hit to leȝe[5]?'

'Whil Y wes a clerc in scole,
Wel muchel Y couþe[6] of lore[7];
Ych have þoled[8] for þy love
Woundes fele[9] sore,
Fer from [hom],[10] and eke from men
Under þe wode hore[11];
Suete ledy, þou rewe of me,
Nou may[12] Y no more.'

'Þou semest wel to ben a clerc,
For þou spekest so stille[13];
Shalt þou never for mi love
Woundes þole grylle[14];
Fader, moder, and al my kun
Ne shal me holde so stille
Þat Y nam[15] þyn, and þou art myn,
To don al þi wille.'

CHAUCER, BALLADE

From the *Legend of Good Women*, Prologue B, lines 249–69

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte[16] tresses clere;
Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al adoun;
Hyd, Jonathas,[17] al thy frendly manere;
Penalopee, and Marcia[18] Catoun,
Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;

[1] unless
[2] soon
[3] saw
[4] good
[5] lie
[6] knew
[7] learning
[8] suffered
[9] very
[10] em. Wright (*Spec. Lyr. Poetry*, p. 91)
[11] hoary; MS. gore
[12] can
[13] gently
[14] cruel
[15] am not
[16] golden
[17] Cf. 1 Sam. 19. 2
[18] daughter of Cato of U

Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude and Eleyne,
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.[1]

Thy faire body, lat hit nat appere,
  Lavyne[2]; and thou, Lucresse of Rome toun,
And Polixene,[3] that boghten love so dere,
  And Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
  Hyde ye your trouthe of love and your renoun;
And thou, Tisbe,[4] that hast of love swich peyne;
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Herro,[5] Dido, Laudomia,[6] alle yfere,[7]
  And Phyllis,[8] hanging for thy Demophoun,
And Canace,[9] espyed by thy chere,[10]
  Ysiphile,[11] betraysed with[12] Jasoun,
  Maketh of your trouthe neyther boost ne soun;
Nor Ypermistre[13] or Adriane,[14] ye tweyne;
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

MINOT, EDWARD THE THIRD'S FIRST INVASION OF FRANCE

Laurence Minot (fl. 1333–1352) is a writer of whom virtually nothing is known except that he produced a series of eleven poems, of which this is No. 4. Herford has thus characterized him (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* 38. 47): 'While Minot has no great literary value, and gives almost no new information, he embodies in a most vivid way the militant England of his day. He has but one subject, the triumph of England and the English king over French and Scots. The class-divisions among Englishmen are for him wholly merged in the unity of England; himself probably of Norman origin, his habitual language is the strongest and homeliest Saxon. His verse is throughout inspired by savage triumph in the national successes. He has no elegiac or tender note.' Cf. Hall's edition, pp. xii–xiii; Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 322–4.

1 overshadow, eclipse
2 Lavinia; cf. Virgil, *Æn.* 6. 764 ff., etc.
3 daughter of Priam; cf. Ovid, *Met.* 13. 439 ff.
4 Thisbe; cf. Ovid, *Met.* 4. 55–166
5 Hero; cf. Ovid, *Her.* 18, 19
6 Laodamia; cf. Ovid, *Her.* 13
7 together
8 Cf. Ovid, *Her.* 2
9 Cf. Ovid, *Her.* 11
10 countenance
11 Hypsipyle, first wife of Jason; see her legend in Chaucer, *Leg. Good Women*
12 betrayed by
13 Hypermnestra; cf. Ovid, *Her.* 14
14 Ariadne; see Chaucer, *Leg. Good Women*

Our poem celebrates the fact that, Edward III and Philip of France having offered each other battle, Edward drew up his troops near La Flamengerie in northern France, on Saturday, Oct. 23, 1339, and waited for Philip to arrive, who, however, retreated from his position, five or six miles away, leaving behind him a thousand horses in a marsh (Hall, p. 54; cf. *Dict. Nat. Biog.* 17. 55).

The poem here printed is from Joseph Hall's edition (Oxford, 1887).

Edward, oure cumly king,
In Braband has his woning,
With mani cumly knight;
And in þat land, trewly to tell,
Ordanis he still for to dwell,
To[1] time he think to fight.

Now God, þat es of mightes maste,
Grant him grace of þe Haly Gaste
His heritage to win!
And Mari moder, of mercy fre,
Save oure king and his menȝe[2]
Fro sorow, and schame, and syn!

Þus in Braband has he bene —
Whare he bifore was seldom sene —
For to prove[3] þaire japes;
Now no langer wil he spare,
Bot unto Fraunce fast will he fare,
To confort him with grapes.[4]

Furth[5] he ferd into France;
God save him for mischance,
And all his cumpany!
Þe nobill duc of Braband
With him went into þat land,
Redy to lif or dy.

[1] until the
[2] retainers
[3] make trial of
[4] Cf. Cant. 2. 5.
[5] MS. ff.

Þan þe riche floure de lice[1]
Wan þare ful litill prise[2]; —
  Fast he[3] fled for ferde.[4]
Þe right aire[5] of þat cuntre
Es cumen, with all his knightes fre,
  To schac him by þe berd.

Sir Philip þe Valayse,[6]
Wit his men in þo dayes,
  To batale had he thoght:
He bad his men þam purvay[7]
Withowten lenger delay;
  Bot he ne held it noght.

He broght folk ful grete wone,[8]
Ay sevyn oganis one,
  Þat ful wele wapnid were;
Bot sone, whe[n] he herd ascry[9]
Þat King Edward was nere þarby,
  Þan durst he noght cum nere.

In þat morni[n]g fell a myst,
And when oure I[n]gliss men it wist,
  It changed all þaire chere;
Oure king unto God made his bone,[10]
And God sent him gude confort sone —
  Þe weder wex ful clere.

Oure king and his men held þe felde
Stalwortly, with spere and schelde,
  And thoght to win his right,
With lordes, and with knightes kene,
And oþer doghty men bydene,[11]
  Þat war ful frek[12] to fight.

1 *fleur de lis*
2 glory
3 Philip VI of France
4 fear
5 heir (i.e. Edward)
6 de Valois (the king)
7 make ready
8 plenty
9 report (by spies)
10 prayer
11 together
12 eager

When Sir Philip of France herd tell
þat King Edward in feld walld dwell,
þan gayned[1] him no gle;
He traisted of[2] no better bote.[3]
Bot both on hors and on fote
He hasted him to fle.

It semid he was ferd for strokes
When he did fell his grete okes
Obout his pavilyoune;
Abated was þan all his pride,
For langer þare durst he noght bide,
His bost was broght all doune.

þe king of Beme[4] had cares colde,
þat was ful[5] hardy and bolde
A stede to amstride.[6]
[He and][7] þe king als[8] of Naverne[9]
War fain for ferd[10] in þe ferne[11]
þaire heviddes[12] for to hide.

And leves[13] wele — it es no lye —
þe felde hat[14] Flemangrye[15]
þat King Edward was in,
With princes þat war stif ande bolde,
And dukes þat war doghty tolde,[16]
In batayle to bigin.

þe princes þat war riche[17] on raw,[18]
Gert[19] nakers[20] strike, and trumpes blaw,
And made mirth at þaire might;

1 availed
2 expected
3 resource
4 Bohemia
5 MS. fur (em. Ritson)
6 bestride
7 em. R.
8 also
9 Navarre (father-in-law of Philip)
10 MS. faire feld (em. Hall, with fered for ferd)
11 were glad, for fear, in the fern
12 heads
13 believe (imp.)
14 was called
15 MS. ff-
16 considered
17 splendid
18 row (line of battle?)
19 caused
20 kettle-drums

Both alblast[1] and many a bow
War redy railed[2] opon a row,
And ful frek for to fight.

Gladly þai gaf mete and drink,
So þat þai suld þe better swink[3] —
Þe wight[4] men þat þar ware.
Sir Philip of Fraunce fled for dout,[5]
And hied[6] him hame with all his rout;
Coward, God giff him care[7]!

For þare þan had þe lely flowre[8]
Lorn all halely[9] his honowre,
Þat sogat[10] fled for ferd;
Bot oure King Edward come ful still,
When þat he trowed[11] no harm him till,[12]
And keped[13] him in þe berde.[14]

THE DEATH OF EDWARD III

From a poem (written in 1377) in MS. Brit. Mus. Addit. 22,283. Our extract is from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (Rolls Series) 1. 216–7, and comprises lines 17–80.

Sum tyme an Englis schip we had,
Nobel hit was, and heih of tour[15];
Thorw al Christendam hit was drad,[16]
And stif wold stonde in uch a stour,[17]
And best dorst byde a scharp schour,[18]
And other stormes smale and grete;
Nou is that schip, that bar the flour,
Selden seiȝe[19] and sone forȝete.

1 arblast, crossbow
2 set in order
3 toil
4 stout
5 fear
6 *hastened*
7 distress
8 See 423 1
9 wholly
10 thus
11 looked for
12 to himself
13 seized
14 beard
15 tower
16 feared
17 every battle
18 tempest
19 seen

Into that schip ther longeth a roothur,[1]
That steered the schip, and governed hit;
In al this world nis such anothur,
As me thenketh in my wit.
Whil schip and rothur togeder was knit,
Thei dredde nother tempest, druyȝe,[2] nor wete,
Nou be thei bothe in synder flit,[3]
That selden seiȝe is sone forȝete.

Scharpe wawes[4] that schip has sayled,
And sayed[5] alle sees[6] at aventur;
For wynt[7] ne wederes[8] never hit fayled,
Wil[9] the roothur miht enduir.[10]
Thouȝ the see were rouȝ, or elles dimuuir,[11]
Gode havenes that schip wold geete.[12]
Nou is that schip, I am wel suir,[13]
Selde iseye and sone forȝete.

This good schip I may remene[14]
To the chivalrye of this londe;
Sum tyme thei counted nouȝt a bene[15]
Be[16] al Fraunce, Ich understonde.
Thei toke and slouȝ hem with her wonde[17] —
The power of Fraunce, bothe[18] smale and grete;
And brouȝt the kyng hider to byde her bonde[19];
And nou riht sone hit is forȝete.

That schip hadde a ful siker[20] mast,
And a sayl strong and large,
That made the gode schip never agast
To undertake a thinge of charge.[21]
And to that schip ther longed[22] a barge,

1 rudder
2 drought
3 removed asunder
4 waves
5 braved
6 seas
7 wind
8 storms
9 while
10 endure
11 calm
12 attain
13 sure
14 compare
15 bean
16 by; MS. beo
17 rod, scep
18 MS. beth
19 fetters
20 secure
21 moment
22 belonged

Of al Fraunce ȝaf[1] nouȝt a cleete.[2]
  To us hit was a siker targe[3];
And now riht clene hit is forȝete.

The rother was nouther ok ne elm,
  Hit was Edward the Thridde, the noble kniht;
The prince his sone bar up his helm,
  That never scoumfited[4] was in fiht.
  The kyng him rod and rouwed[5] ariht,
The prince dredde nouther stok nor streete.[6]
  Nou of hem we lete ful liht[7];
That selden is seiȝe is sone forȝete.

The swifte barge was Duk Henri,[8]
  That noble kniht and wel assayed;
And in his leggaunce[9] worthily
  He abod mony a bitter brayd[10];
  Ȝif that his enemys ouȝt outrayed,[11]
To chasteis hem wolde he not lete.[12]
  Nou is that lord ful lowe ileyd;
That selde is seiȝe is sone forȝete.

This gode comunes,[13] bi the rode,
  I likne hem to the schipes mast;
That with heore catel[14] and with heore goode[15]
  Mayntened the werre[16] both furst and last.
  The wynd that bleuȝ the schip with blast,
Hit was gode preȝeres, I sey hit atrete[17];
  Nou is devoutnes out icast,
And mony gode dedes ben clene forȝete. . . .

1 cared
2 cleat
3 shield
4 discomfited
5 rode and rowed
6 street (for rhyme, instead of 'stok nor ston')
7 make little account
8 Henry of Lancaster (d. 1361)
9 allegiance
10 stroke
11 inflicted any injuries
12 refrain
13 commons
14 property
15 goods
16 war
17 distinctly

CHAUCER, COMPLAINT TO HIS EMPTY PURSE

To you, my purse, and to non other wight[1]
Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere;
I am so sory, now that ye be light,
That certes, but[2] ye make me hevy chere,
Me were as leef be leyd upon my bere;
For whiche unto your mercy thus I crye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot[3] I dye!

Now voucheth sauf[4] this day, or[5] hit be night,
That I of you the blisful soun[6] may here,
Or see your colour lyk the sonne bright,
That of yelownesse[7] hadde never pere.[8]
Ye be my lyf, ye be myn hertes stere,[9]
Quene of comfort and of good companye.
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now purs, that be[10] to me my lyves[11] light,
And saveour,[12] as doun in this worlde here,
Out of this toune help me through your might,
Sin[13] that ye wole nat been my tresorere;
For I am shave[14] as nye[15] as any frere.
But yit I pray unto your curtesye,
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

[1] creature
[2] unless
[3] must
[4] vouchsafe
[5] ere
[6] sound
[7] referring to gold
[8] equal
[9] guide
[10] are
[11] life's
[12] saviour
[13] since
[14] shaved
[15] close

I HAVE A GENTLE COCK

About 1450. From MS. Brit. Mus. Sloane 2593, as printed by Wright in *Songs and Carols* (Pickering, London, 1836). See 199 23 ff.

I have a gentil cok[1]
Crowyt[h] me day[2];
He doth[3] me rysyn erly,
My matynis for to say.

I have a gentil cok[1];
Comyn he is of gret[4];
His comb is of reed corel,
His tayl[5] is of get.[6]

I have a gentil cok[1];
Comyn he is of kynde[7];
His comb is of reed corel,[8]
His tayl is of inde.[9]

His leggs ben of asour,
So gentil and so smale;
His spors arn of sylver quyt[10]
Into the wortewale.[11]

His eynyn arn of cristal,
Lokyn[12] al in aumbyr;
And every nygt he perchit[h] hym
In myn ladyis chaumbyr.

[1] MS. cook
[2] announces day to me by his crowing
[3] makes
[4] great (lineage)
[5] MS. tayil
[6] jet
[7] he is true to his breed
[8] MS. scorel
[9] indigo
[10] white
[11] quick (*lit.* root)
[12] enclosed

BACHELOR'S SONG

About 1460–1490. From MS. Bodl. Eng. Poet. e. 1, printed by Wright in *Songs and Carols* (Percy Soc. 23), p. 27.

A, a, a, o,[1]
Yet I love wherso I go.

In all this warld [n]is a meryar life
Than is a ȝong man withoutyn a wyfe;
For he may lyven withouȝten stryfe,
In every place wherso he go.

In every place he is loved over all
Among maydyns gret and small,
In dauncing, in pypyng, and rennyng at the ball,
In every place wherso he go.

Thei lat lyȝt[2] be husbondmen,[3]
Whan thei at the balle ren[4];
They cast hyr love to ȝong[e] men
In every place wherso he go.

Than sey maydens: 'Farwell, Jack[5]!
Thi love is pressyd al in thi pa[c]k[6];
Thou beryst thi love behynd thi back,'
In every place wherso he go.

[1] MS. a
[2] easily
[3] married men
[4] MS. rene
[5] MS. Jacke
[6] MS. pake

CHAUCER, TRUTH

Fle fro the pres,[1] and dwelle with sothfastnesse[2];
  Suffise[3] thin owene thing, thogh it be smal;
For hord[4] hath hate, and clymbyng tykelnesse,[5]
  Prees[6] hath envye, and wele[7] blent[8] overal[9];
  Savoure[10] no more thanne the byhove[11] shal;
Reule weel thiself, that other folk canst reede,[12]
And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede.[13]

Tempest[14] the[15] noght al croked to redresse,
  In trust of hire[16] that turneth as a bal;
Greet reste stant in litel besynesse,[17]
  Bywar therfore to spurne agayn an al[18];
  Stryve not as doth the crokke[19] with the wal.
Daunte[20] thiself, that dauntest otheres dede,
And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede.

That the is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,[21]
  The wrastlyng for[22] this worlde axeth[23] a fal;
Her is non hom,[24] her nys but wyldernesse.
  Forth, pylgrym, forth! Forth, beste, out of thi stal!
  Know thi contre, loke up, thank God of al!
Hold the hye weye, and lat thi gost[25] the lede,
And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede.

1 crowd
2 truth
3 subj.
4 hoarding
5 instability
6 the throng of courtiers
7 prosperity
8 blinds
9 everywhere
10 relish, care for
11 suit, fit
12 direct
13 there is no fear
14 torment
15 thyself
16 Fortune
17 fuss, worry (cf. Isa. 30. 15)
18 awl (cf. Acts 9. 5)
19 crock, earthen pot
20 conquer
21 submission
22 to obtain
23 calls for, invites
24 Cf. Heb. 11. 9, 10; 13. 14
25 spirit

UBI SUNT QUI ANTE NOS FUERUNT?

About 1275. From MS. Bodl. Digby 86, as printed by Furnivall, *Minor Poems of the Vernon MS., Part II* (E.E.T.S. 117), pp. 761 ff. (ten stanzas in all); cf. the somewhat different version in Böddeker, *Altengl. Dicht.*, pp. 229-30, which has suggested two or three emendations.

The keynote is struck by Boethius (Book 2, Metre 7):

Ubi nunc fidelis ossa Fabricii manent,
Quid Brutus aut rigidus Cato?

These lines are expanded in translation by King Alfred: 'Where now are the bones of the famous and wise goldsmith, Weland?' etc. One of the most famous variations on the theme is by Villon (1461), the first of whose stanzas runs:

Dictes moy où, n'en quel pays,
Est Flora, la belle Rommaine:
Archipiada, ne Thaïs,
Qui fut sa cousine germaine:
Echo, parlant quant bruyt on maine
Dessus riviere ou sus estan,
Qui beaulté ot trop plus qu'humaine?
— Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!

This is translated by Payne as follows:

Tell me, where, in what land of shade,
Hides fair Flora of Rome? and where
Are Thaïs and Archiapade,
Cousins german in beauty rare?
And Echo, more than mortal fair,
That when one calls by river flow,
Or marish, answers out of the air?
— But what has become of last year's snow?

The last four lines are thus translated in Rossetti's version:

Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere,
She whose beauty was more than human?
— But where are the snows of yester-year?

See also below, p. 434; Wells, *Manual*, p. 824 (30).

Were beþ þey [þat][1] biforen us weren,
Houndes ladden and havekes beren,
And hadden feld and wode?

[1] Cf. B.

Þe riche levedies in hoere bour,
Þat wereden gold in hoere tressour,[1]
Wiþ hoere brigtte rode[2]?

[Þey][3] eten and drounken, and maden hem glad;
Hoere lif was al wiþ gamen ilad[4];
Men kneleden[5] hem biforen;
Þey beren hem wel swiþe heye[6];
And, in a twincling of an eye,
Hoere soules weren forloren.

Were is þat lawing[7] and that song,
Þat trayling and that proude gong,[8]
Þo havekes and þo houndes?
Al þat joye is went away,
Þat wele is comen to 'Weylaway!'—
To manie harde stoundes.[9]

Hoere paradis þey[10] nomen[11] here,
And nou þey lien in helle ifere[12];
Þe fuir hit brennes hevere.
Long is ay,[13] and long is o,[14]
Long is wy,[15] and long is wo[16];
Þennes ne comeþ þey nevere.

THOMAS OF HALES, LOVE-SONG

Thomas of Hales was a Franciscan friar, who wrote this 'luve-ron' of 210 lines at the request of a young nun, in the reign of Henry III (probably before 1240, according to *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* I. 258; soon after 1244, according to Morris, *Old Eng. Misc.*, p. xi; about 1272, *N. E. D.*). The extract below is from the MS. of Jesus College, Oxford (lines 65–120), as reproduced in *Old English Miscellany* (E.E.T.S. 49), pp. 93–9. A translation of thirteen stanzas,

[1] braids, tresses
[2] complexion
[3] Cf. B.
[4] led
[5] MS. keneleden
[6] very exceedingly high
[7] laughing
[8] gait, carriage
[9] experiences
[10] MS. by
[11] took
[12] side by side
[13] ever
[14] always; MS. ho
[15] alas
[16] woe

including the first five printed here, may be found in Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 208–11. He says: 'We have here an art-poetry not quite developed in form, of the simplest, noblest mould, a contemplative lyric, which, springing from warm feeling, moves calmly and quietly, without subtlety of reflection or trifling with forms, in euphonious, richly figurative speech.' Another version is in Miss Weston's *Chief Middle English Poets*, pp. 343–5.

Hwer is Paris and Heleyne,
þat weren so bryht and feyre on bleo[1]?
Amadas and Ideyne,[2]
Tristram, Yseude, and alle þeo[3]?
Ector, wiþ his scharpe meyne,[4]
And Cesar, riche of wor[l]des feo[5]?
Heo beoþ iglyden ut of þe reyne,
So[6] þe schef[7] is of þe cleo.[8]

Hit is of heom al so[9] hit nere.
Of heom me haveþ[10] wunder itold—
Nere hit reuþe[11] for to here[12]—
Hw hi were wiþ pyne[13] aquold,[14]
And hwat hi þoleden[15] alyve[16] here;
Al is heore hot iturnd to cold.
þus is þes world of false fere[17];
Fol he is þe on hire is bold.

þeyh he were so riche mon
As Henry,[18] ure [noble] kyng,

[1] hue
[2] MS. Dideyne
[3] those
[4] power
[5] wealth
[6] as
[7] sheaf
[8] brae, steep hillside
[9] as if
[10] one has, they have
[11] were it not pity
[12] MS. heren
[13] pain
[14] destroyed
[15] endured
[16] in life
[17] appearance, show
[18] Henry III (1216–1272)

3. Amadas: see Schofield, pp. 322, 479.—Ideyne: there is a thirteenth-century OF. romance of Breton origin, *Amadas et Idoine* (ed. Hippeau, Paris. 1863), and allusion is made to the story by Gower (*Conf. Am.* 6.879) and the *Cursor Mundi* (v. 20), etc.; cf. Gaston Paris, *Litt. Fr. au Moyen Age.* § 65, and *English Miscellany presented to Dr. Furnivall*, pp. 386 ff. (where there are other references); Schofield, pp. 117, 375.

And al so veyr as Absalon,
  Þat nevede on eorþe non evenyng,[1]
Al were sone his prute[2] agon,[3]
  Hit nere on ende wrþ on heryng.[4]
Mayde, if þu wilnest[5] after leofmon,[6]
  Ich teche þe enne[7] treowe King.

A! swete, if þu ikn[e]owe[8]
  Þe gode þewes[9] of þisse Childe!
He is feyr, and bryht on heowe,
  Of glede chere,[10] of mode mylde,
Of lufsum lost,[11] of truste treowe,
  Freo of heorte, of wisdom wilde[12];
Ne þurfte[13] þe never re[o]we,
  Myhtestu do[14] þe in his [h]ylde.[15]

He is ricchest Mon of londe,
  So wide so mon speketh wiþ muþ;
Alle heo beoþ to[16] his honde,
  Est and west, norþ and suþ.
Henri, King of Engelonde,
  Of hym he halt,[17] and to hym buhþ.[18]
Mayde, to þe he send his sonde,[19]
  And wilneþ for to beo þe cuþ.

Ne byt[20] he wiþ þe lond ne leode,[21]
  Vouh,[22] ne gray,[23] ne rencyan.[24]
Naveþ he þerto none neode;
  He is riche and weli[25] man.

1 peer; cf. 420 21
2 pride
3 vanished.
4 herring
5 longest
6 lover
7 a
8 knew
9 qualities
10 countenance
11 delight
12 (?)
13 thou wouldst need; MS. þurhte
14 put
15 grace
16 in
17 holds
18 bows
19 message; MS. schonde
20 asks
21 people
22 particolored fur
23 gray fur
24 a kind of cloth
25 wealthy

If þu him woldest luve beode,[1]
And bycumen his leovemon,
He brouhte[2] þe to suche wede,[3]
Þat[4] naveþ king ne kayser non.

Hwat[5] spekestu of eny bolde[6]
Þat wrouhte þe wise Salomon?
Of jaspe, of saphir, of merede[7] golde,
And of mony onoþer ston?
Hit is feyrure of feole volde[8]
More þan Ich eu telle con,
Þis bold, mayde, þe is bihote,[9]
If þat þu bist his leovemon.

EARTH UPON EARTH

Of this poem there are three versions (A, B, C). A is represented by two poems, B by twenty, and C by one—not to mention a rather anomalous example, difficult to classify. The earliest texts date from about 1310; that printed here is from 1430–1450 (MS. Lambeth 853), and is No. 10 of B. All the known texts have been printed by Miss Hilda Murray, with the necessary apparatus, in *Erthe upon Erthe* (E.E.T.S. 141). The Stratford-on-Avon version was printed by Longfellow in *Outre-Mer.*

The theme is: 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return' (Gen. 3. 19).

Erþe out of erþe is wondirly wrouȝt,
Erþe of erþe haþ gete[10] a dignyte of nouȝt,
Erþe upon erþe haþ sett al his þouȝt,
How þat erþe upon erþe may be hiȝ[11] brouȝt.

Erþe upon erþe wold he be a king;
But how erþe schal to erþe þenkiþ he noþing:
Whanne þat erþe biddiþ erþe hise rentis hom bring,
Þan schal erþe out of erþe have a piteuous parting.

1 offer
2 would bring
3 apparel
4 as
5 why
6 building
7 purified
8 many times
9]
10]
11]

Erþe upon erþe wynneþ castels and touris;
Þan seiþ erþe to erþe: 'Now is þis al houris.'
Whanne erþe upon erþe haþ biggid[1] up hise boures,
Þanne schal erþe upon erþe suffir scharpe schouris.[2]

Erþe gooth upon erþe as molde upon molde,
So gooth erþe upon erþe al gliteringe in golde,
Like as erþe unto erþe nevere go scholde,[3]
And ȝit schal erþe unto erthe raþer[4] þan he wolde.

O þou wrecchid erþe, þat on erþe traveilist[5] nyȝt and day,
To florische[6] þe erþe, to peynte þe erþe with wantowne aray,
Ȝit schal þou, erþe, for al þi erþe, make þou it nevere so queyn
and gay,
Out of þis erþe into þe erþe, þere to clinge[7] as a clot[8] of clay.

O wrecchid man, whi art þou proud, þat art of þe erþe makid?
Hider brouȝttist þou no schroud,[9] but poore come þou and nakid.
Whanne þi soule is went[10] out, and þi bodi in erþe rakid,
Þan þi bodi þat was rank[11] and undevout, of alle men is bihatid.

Out of þis erþe cam to þis erþe þis wrecchid garnement[12];
To hide þis erþe, to happe[13] þis erþe, to him was cloþinge lente;
Now gooþ erþe upon erþe, ruli[14] raggid and rent,
Þerfore schal erþe undir þe erþe have hidiose turment.

Whi þat erþe to myche loveþ erþe wondir me þink,
Or whi þat erþe for superflue erþe to sore sweete[15] wole or swynk[16]
Ffor whanne þat erþe upon erþe is brouȝt withinne þe brink,[17]
Þan schal erþe of þe erþe have a rewful stynk.[18]

1 built
2 trials
3 MS. schulde
4 sooner
5 laborest
6 adorn
7 dry, shrivel up
8 clod
9 garment
10 gone
11 proud
12 garment (of flesh)
13 cover
14 ruefully
15 sweat
16 toil
17 of the gra
18 MS. swynk

Lo! erþe upon erþe considere þou may,
How erþe comeþ into erþe nakid alway,
Whi schulde erþe upon erþe go now so stoute or gay,
Whanne erþe schal passe out of erþe in so poore aray?

Wolde God þerfore þis erþe, while þat he is upon this erþe,
Upon þis wolde hertili þinke,
And how þe erþe out of þe erþe schal have his azenrisyng,[1]
And þis erþe for þis erþe schal zeelde[2] streite[3] rekenyng;
Schulde nevere þan þis erþe for þis erþe mysplese hevene King.

Þerfore, þou erþe upon erþe, þat so wickidli hast wrouzt,
While þat þou, erþe, art upon erþe, turne azen þi þouzt,
And praie to þat God upon erþe þat al þe erþe haþ wrouzt,
Þat þou, erþe upon erþe, to blis may be brouzt.

O þou Lord þat madist þis erþe for þis erþe, and suffridist
peynes ille,
Lete nevere þis erþe, for þis erþe, myscheve[4] ne spille,[5]
But þat þis erþe on þis erþe be evere worchinge þi wille,
So þat þis erþe from þis erþe may stie[6] up to þin hiz hille. Am

FILIUS REGIS MORTUUS EST

About 1430. From MS. Lambeth 853, printed by Furnivall in *Politi ligious, and Love Poems* (reprint of E.E.T.S. 15), p. 233. Thirteen stanza

As resoun rewlid my rechelees[7] mynde,
Bi wielde[8] waies as Y hadde went,
A solempne citee me fortuned to fynde;
To turne þerto was myne entent.
A maiden Y mette, a modir hynde,[9]
Sobbinge and sizynge, sche was neer schent[10];

1 resurrection; MS. -risynge
2 yield
3 strict
4 come to grief
5 perish
6 ascend
7 reckless; MS. riche-
8 wild
9 gr
10 pr

Sche wepte, sche wailid, so sore sche pined;
  Hir heer, hir face, sche tuggid and rent:
  Sche tuggid, sche taar with greet turment,
    Sche racide[1] hir skyn, bothe body and brest;
  Sche seide þeise wordis evere as sche went:
    Filius Regis mortuus est.

'The Kingis Sone,' sche seide, 'is deed,
  Þe joie, þe substaunce of my liif[2];
Þe modir to se hir Sone so blede,
  It kittiþ[3] myn herte as with a knyf.
My Sone þat Y was woont to fede,
  To lulle, to lappe, with songis riif[4]—
Out of his herte his blood to schede
  Makiþ me, his modir, in myche striif.[5]
  I am boþe maiden, modir, and wiif,
    Sones[6] have Y no mo to souke my brest;
  I may make sorewe without reliif,
    For *Filius Regis mortuus est.*'

QUIA AMORE LANGUEO

About 1450–1500. From MS. Camb. Univ. Lib. Hh. 4. 12, printed by Furnivall, *op. cit.*, p. 181. Sixteen stanzas in all. Translation in Weston, *op. cit.*, pp. 349–50.

  In the vaile of restles mynd,
    I sowght in mownteyn and in mede,
  Trustyng a treu lofe for to fynd.
    Upon an hyll than toke I hede;
    A voise I herd—and nere[7] I yede[8]—
      In gret dolour complaynyng tho:
    'See, dere soule, my sydes blede,
      Quia amore langueo.'

1 tore
2 MS. liife
3 cuts
4 rife
5 MS. striife
6 MS. and sones
7 nearer
8 approached

Upon thys mownt I fand a tree;
Undir thys tree a man sittyng;
From hede to fote wowndyd was he,
Hys hert-blode I saw bledyng;
A semely man to be a kyng,
A graciose face to loke unto.
I askyd hym how he had paynyng,[1]
He said: '*Quia amore langueo.*

I am treu love that fals was never:
My sistur, mannys soule, I loved hyr thus;
Bycause I wold on no wyse dissevere,
I left my kyngdome gloriouse;
I purveyd[2] hyr a place full preciouse;
She flytt,[3] I folowyd; I luffed her soo
That I suffred thes paynes piteuouse,
Quia amore langueo.'

HE BARE HIM UP

About 1500 (or earlier). From MS. Oxford Balliol 354, as printed by I in *Anglia* 26. 175–6 (slightly different in his *Neuenglisches Lesebuch* 1. 142) *þ* for MS. *y*. The knight is of course Jesus Christ.

Lully, lulley, lully,[4] lulley,
Þe fawcon hath born my make[5] away.

He bare hym up, he bare hym down,
He bare hym into an orchard browne.

In þat orchard þere was an halle
Þat was hangid with purpill and pall.

And in þat hall þere was a bede[6];
Hit was hangid with gold so rede.

1 distress
2 provided
3 fled
4 MS. lulley (em. F.)

And yn þat bed þere lythe a knyght,
His wowndis bledyng day and nyght.

By þat bedeside kneleth a may,[1]
And she wepeth both nyght and day.

And by þat beddeside þere stondith a ston,
'Corpus Christi' wretyn þeron.

THE PEARL

The Pearl is an elegiac poem with allegorical elements, embodying a vision by the author of a maiden closely related to him, who had died at an early age. Disregarding stanza 72 (for which see Osgood's edition, p. xlvi, note 1), the poem falls into 20 sections, each consisting of 5 twelve-line stanzas, concatenated by the recurrence of the last word of a stanza in the first line following. The rhyme-scheme is ababababbcbc. The date is about 1370; the author wrote also *Gawain and the Green Knight* (see above, p. 53), besides two other poems, *Purity* and *Patience*. There is only a single manuscript, Brit. Mus. Cott. Nero A. X + 4 (facsimile in Yale University Library). The best edition is by Osgood (Belles Lettres Series, 1906); to this the student is referred for further information. There are translations by Gollancz (1891), Mitchell (1906), Coulton (1906), Osgood (1907), Jewett (1908), and Weston (in *Romance, Vision, and Satire*, 1912); of these the best is Osgood's, in prose.

Tennyson thus apostrophized the poem in Gollancz's edition:

We lost you — for how long a time! —
True pearl of our poetic prime;
We found you, and you gleam reset
In Britain's lyric coronet.

With reference to the emphasis upon the jeweler's art, we know that from the death of St. Louis (1270) this had surpassed all other industrial arts in France (Labarte, *Inventaire du Mobilier de Charles V*, p. 1).

Our text is taken from Osgood's edition (by the kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. D. C. Heath & Co.), with the substitution, when etymologically indicated, of *z* for the character ȝ, which usually denotes palatal *g*, of *and* for &, and with the normalization of *u* and *v*; the emendations are those of Osgood's text. Our extracts comprise lines 37–300, 385–420.

To þat spot þat I in speche expoun[2]
I entred, in þat erber[3] grene,

[1] maid [2] tell of [3] lawn

In Auguste, in a hyȝ [1] seysoun,
Quen corne is corven [2] wyth crokez [3] kene,
On huyle [4] þer perle hit trendeled [5] doun
Schadowed [6] þis wortez [7] ful schyre [8] and schene
Gilofre,[10] gyngure,[11] and gromylyoun,[12]
And pyonys [13] powdered [14] ay bytwene.
Ȝif hit watz semly on to sene,
A fayr reflayr [15] ȝet fro hit flot,[16]
Þer wonys [17] þat worþyly,[18] I wot and wene,[19]
My precious perle wythouten spot.

Bifore þat spot my honde I spenn[e]d,[20]
For care ful colde þat to me caȝt [21];
A de[r]vely dele [22] in my hert denned,[23]
Þaȝ resoun sette myselven saȝt.[24]
I playned [25] my perle þat þer watz spenned [26]
Wyth fyrte skyllez [27] þat faste faȝt [28];
Þaȝ kynde [29] of Kryst me comfort kenned,[30]
My wreched wylle in wo ay wraȝte.[31]
I felle upon þat floury flaȝt,[32]
Suche odour to my hernez [33] schot;
I slode [34] upon a slepyng-slaȝte [35] —
On þat prec[i]os perle wythouten spot.

Fro spot [36] my spyryt þer sprang in space,
My body on balke [4] þer bod [37] in sweven [38];

[1] high (in a liturgical sense; probably the Assumption of the Virgin, August 15)
[2] mowed
[3] sickles
[4] mound
[5] rolled
[6] shaded
[7] plants
[8] bright
[9] fair
[10] gillyflower
[11] ginger
[12] gromwell
[13] peonies
[14] scattered thickly
[15] fragrance
[16] flowed
[17] dwells
[18] worshipful one
[19] suppose
[20] clasped
[21] seized on me
[22] sudden sorrow
[23] made tumult
[24] though reason reconciled me
[25] bemoaned
[26] enclosed
[27] frightened reaso
[28] contended
[29] the nature
[30] imparted
[31] wrought
[32] turf
[33] brain
[34] sank
[35] visitation of sleep
[36] forth
[37] remained
[38] dream

My goste is gon in Godez grace,
In aventure þer[1] mervaylez[2] meven.[3]
I ne wyste in þis worlde quere þat hit wace,[4]
Bot I knew me keste[5] þer klyfez[6] cleven[7];
Towarde a foreste I bere[8] þe face,
Where rych rokkez wer to dyscreven.[9]
Þe lygt of hem mygt no mon leven,[10]
Þe glemande[11] glory þat of hem glent[12];
For wern never webbez þat wygez weven[13]
Of half so dere adub[be]mente.[14]

Dubbed[15] wern alle þo downez sydez[16]
Wyth crystal klyffez so cler of kynde.[17]
Holte-wodez[18] brygt aboute hem bydez[19]
Of bollez[20] as blwe[21] as ble of ynde[22];
As bornyst sylver þe lef onslydez,[23]
Þat þike con trylle[24] on uch a tynde[25]
Quen[26] glem of glodez[27] agaynz hem glydez;
Wyth schymeryng schene[28] ful schrylle[29] þay schynde.
Þe gravayl þat on grounde con grynde[30]
Wern precious perlez of Oryente;
Þe sunnebemez bot blo and blynde[31]
In respecte of[32] þat adubbement.

The adubbemente of þo downez dere
Garten[33] my goste[34] al greffe forgete;
So frech flavorez[35] of frytez[36] were
As fode hit con me fayre refete.[37]

1 where
2 marvels
3 move
4 was
5 myself to be set down
6 cliffs
7 stand fast
8 turn
9 to be descried
10 believe
11 resplendent
12 gleamed
13 people weave
14 *splendid array*
15 arrayed
16 hillsides
17 by nature
18 woods
19 are
20 trunks of trees
21 blue
22 indigo color
23 unfolds
24 did quiver
25 on each branch
26 when
27 *flashes of light (?)*
28 beautiful shimmering
29 intensely
30 did crunch
31 are but dark and dim
32 compared to
33 caused
34 soul
35 *fresh fragrances*
36 fruits
37 satisfy, refresh

Fowlez[1] þer flowen[2] in fryth[3] in fere,[4]
Of flaumbande hwez,[5] boþe smale and grete;
Bot sytole-stryng[6] and gyternere[7]
Her reken[8] myrþe mo3t not retrete[9];
For, quen þose bryddez her wyngez bete,
Þay songen wyth a swete asent[10];
So grac[i]os gle[11] couþe no mon gete
As here and se her adubbement.[12]

So al watz dubbet on dere asyse[13];
Þat fryth þer[14] fortwne forth me ferez[15];
Þe derþe[16] þerof for to devyse
Nis no wy3[17] worþe[18] þat tonge berez.
I welke[19] ay forth in wely[20] wyse;
No bonk[21] so byg[22] þat did me derez.[23]
Þe fyrre[24] in þe fryth, þe fei[r]er con ryse
Þe playn, þe plonttez,[25] þe spyse,[26] þe perez,[27]
And rawez[28] and randez[29] and rych reverez[30]
As fyldor[31] fyn her bonkes brent.[32]
I wan[33] to a water by schore þat scherez[34];
Lorde, dere watz hit[35] adubbement!

The dubbemente of þo derworth[36] depe[37]
Wern bonkez[38] bene[39] of beryl bry3t;
Swangeande[40] swete þe water con swepe,
Wyth a rownande[41] rourde[42] raykande[43] ary3t;

1 birds
2 flew
3 woodland
4 together
5 flaming colors
6 citole-string
7 player on the cithern
8 lively
9 reproduce
10 harmony
11 joy
12 beauty
13 manner
14 where
15 transports
16 glory
17 person
18 worthy
19 walk
20 happy
21 hill
22 difficult
23 as to cause me annoyances
24 further
25 plants
26 spicy shrubs
27 pear-trees
28 hedges
29 borders of streams
30 rivers
31 thread of gold (Fr. *fil d'or*)
32 steep
33 made my way
34 runs swiftly by
35 its
36 rare
37 deep stream
38 banks
39 pleasing
40 rushingly (?)
41 murmuring
42 voice
43 moving forward

In þe founce[1] þer stonden stonez stepe,[2]
As glente[3] þurȝ glas þat glowed and glyȝt,[4]
A[s] stremande sternez,[5] quen stroþe[6] men slepe,
Staren[7] in welkyn in wynter nyȝt;
For uche a pobbel[8] in pole[9] þer pyȝt[10]
Watz emerad, saffer,[11] oþer gemme gente,[12]
Þat alle þe loȝe[13] lemed of[14] lyȝt,
So dere watz hit adubbement.

The dubbement dere of doun[15] and dalez,
Of wod and water and wlonk[16] playnez,
Bylde[17] in me blys, abated my balez,[18]
Forbidden[19] my stresse,[20] dystryed[21] my paynez.
Doun after a strem þat dryȝly[22] halez[23]
I bowed in blys. Bredful[24] my braynez;
Þe fyrre I folȝed[25] þose floty[26] valez,
Þe more strenghþe of joye myn herte straynez.
As fortune fares þer as ho fraynez,[27]
Wheþer solace ho sende oþer ellez sore,[28]
Þe wyȝ to wham her wylle ho waynez[29]
Hyttez[30] to have ay more and more.

More of weel[31] watz in þat wyse
Þen I cowþe telle þaȝ I tom[32] hade:
For urþely[33] herte myȝt not suffyse
To þe tenþe dole[34] of þo gladnez glade.[35]

1 bottom of the stream
2 glittering
3 gleam
4 shimmered
5 stars streaming with light
6 secure (?)
7 glitter
8 pebble
9 pool
10 set
11 sapphire
12 precious
13 water
14 gleamed with
15 hill
16 fair
17 caused to spring up
18 sorrows
19 did away with
20 anguish
21 destroyed
22 mightily
23 flows
24 brimful
25 followed
26 watery
27 where she desires
28 sorrow
29 bestows
30 strives
31 joy
32 leisure
33 earthly
34 part
35 happy

Forþy[1] I þoȝt þat paradyse
Watz þer over gayn[2] þo bonkez brade[3];
I hoped[4] þe water were a devyse[5]
Bytwene myrþez[6] by merez[7] made;
Byȝonde þe broke,[8] by slente[9] oþer slade,[10]
I hope þat mote[11] merked[12] wore.
Bot þe water watz depe, I dorst not wade,
And ever me longed a[y] more and more.

More and more, and ȝet wel mare,
Me lyste[13] to se þe broke byȝonde;
For if hit watz fayr þer I con fare,
Wel loveloker[14] watz þe fyrre londe.
Abowte me con I stote[15] and stare,
To fynde a forþe[16] faste con I fonde[17];
Bot woþez[18] mo iwysse þer ware,
Þe fyrre I stalked by þe stronde;
And ever me þoȝt I schulde not wonde[19]
For wo þer welez so wynne[20] wore.
Þenne nwe note[21] me com on honde,
Þat meved[22] my mynde ay more and more.

More mervayle con my dom[23] adaunt[24];
I seȝ[25] byȝonde þat myry[26] mere
A crystal clyffe ful relusaunt[27];
Mony ryal[28] ray con fro hit rere.[29]
At þe fote þerof þer sete a faunt,[30]
A mayden of menske[31] ful debonere;

[1] wherefore
[2] over against; MS. oþer gayn
[3] broad
[4] supposed
[5] division
[6] pleasure-gardens
[7] boundary-lines
[8] stream
[9] slope
[10] dale
[11] city (referring to the New Jerusalem)
[12] placed
[13] I yearned
[14] lovelier
[15] stumble
[16] ford
[17] seek
[18] dangers
[19] hesitate
[20] fair
[21] a new matter
[22] stirred
[23] mind
[24] overcome
[25] saw
[26] lovely
[27] reflecting much lig
[28] royal
[29] leap
[30] young person (OF. en
[31] decorous

Blysnande[1] whyt watz hyr bleaunt[2] —
I knew hyr wel, I hade sen hyr ere[3] —
As glysnande[4] golde þat man con schere,[5]
So schon þat schene[6] anunder schore.[7]
On lenghe[8] I loked to hyr þere,
Þe lenger I knew hyr more and more.

The more I frayste[9] hyr fayre face,
Her fygure fyn, quen I had fonte,[10]
Suche gladande[11] glory con to me glace[12]
As lyttel byfore þerto watz wonte.
To calle hyr lyste[13] con me enchace,[14]
Bot baysment[15] gef myn hert a brunt[16];
I seȝ hyr in so strange a place,
Such a burre[17] myȝt make myn herte blunt.[18]
Þenne verez[19] ho up her fayre frount,[20]
Hyr vysayge whyt as playn yvore,
Þat stonge myn hert ful stray[21] atount,[22]
And ever þe lenger, þe more and more.

More þen me lyste my drede aros;
I stod ful stylle and dorste not calle,
Wyth yȝen open and mouth ful clos;
I stod as hende[23] as hawk in halle.
I hope[24] þat gostly[25] watz þat porpose[26];
I dred onende[27] quat schulde byfalle —
Lest ho me eschaped þat I þer chos,[28]
Er I at steven[29] hir moȝt stalle.[30]

1 gleaming
2 tunic (OF. *bliaut*)
3 erstwhile
4 glittering
5 cut
6 fair one
7 at the foot of the bank
8 at a distance
9 scanned
10 perceived it
11 causing me to rejoice
12 glide
13 the desire
14 pursue
15 confusion
16 blow
17 shock
18 stunned
19 lifts
20 brow
21 out of the right course
22 confounded
23 quiet
24 suppose
25 spectral
26 intent, thing intended
27 concerning
28 discerned
29 with my voice
30 stop

Þat gracios gay[1] wythouten galle,
So smoþe, so smal, so seme[2] slyȝt,[3]
Rysez up in hir araye ryalle,
A prec[i]os pyece[4] in perlez pyȝt.[5]

Perlez pyȝte of ryal prys[6]
Þere moȝt mon by grace haf sene,
Quen þat frech[7] as flor-de-lys
Doun þe bonke con boȝe[8] bydene.[9]
Al blysnande whyt watz hir bleaunt of byse,[10]
Upon[11] at sydez, and bounden bene[12]
Wyth þe myryeste margarys,[13] at my devyse,[14]
Þat ever I seȝ ȝet with myn yȝen;
Wyth lappez[15] large, I wot and I wene,
Dubbed with double perle and dyȝte,[16]
Her cortel[17] of self sute[18] schene,
Wyth precios perlez al umbepyȝte.[19]

A pyȝt[20] coroune[21] ȝet[22] wer[23] þat gyrle,
Of marjorys[13] and non oþer ston,
Hiȝe pynakled of cler quyt perle,
Wyth flurted[24] flowrez perfet[25] upon.
To hed[26] hade ho non oþer herle[27];
Her here-leke[28] al hyr umbegon.[29]
Her semblaunt[30] sade for doc oþer erle,[31]
Her ble[32] more blaȝt[33] þen whallez bon[34];

1 radiant one
2 modest
3 slight
4 creature, thing
5 arrayed
6 excellence
7 sweet one
8 did betake herself
9 forthwith
10 fine linen; MS. hir beauniys (?) (em. Osgood)
11 open
12 pleasingly
13 pearls
14 in my opinion
15 loose folds
16 adorned
17 kirtle
18 of the very same fashion
19 bordered
20 set with jewels
21 crown
22 besides
23 wore
24 figured
25 perfectly wrought
26 on her head
27 fillet; MS. werle
28 locks of hair (?); MS. lere leke
29 encircled
30 countenance
31 demure enough to suit duke or earl
32 complexion
33 white (bleached)
34 Ivory is called whale's bone in ME.

As schorne golde schyr[1] her fax[2] þenne schon,
On schylderez[3] þat leghe[4] unlapped[5] lyȝte.[6]
Her depe colour ȝet wonted[7] non
Of precios perle in porfyl[8] pyȝte.

Pyȝt and poyned[9] watz uche a hemme,
At honde, at sydez, at overture,[10]
Wyth whyte perle and non oþer gemme,
And bornyste quyte watz hyr vesture.
Bot a wonder perle wythouten wemme[11]
In myddez hyr breste watz sette so sure.
A mannez dom[12] moȝt dryȝly[13] demme[14]
Er mynde moȝt malte in hit mesure[15];
I hope no tong moȝt endure[16]
No saverly[17] saghe[18] say of þat syȝt,
So watz hit clene and cler and pure,
Þat precios perle þer hit watz pyȝt.

Pyȝt in perle, þat precios py[ec]e
On wyþer half[19] water com doun þe schore;
No gladder gome[20] heþen[21] into Grece
Þen I quen ho on brymme wore[22];
Ho watz me nerre[23] þen aunte or nece;
My joy forþy watz much þe more.
Ho p[ro]fered me speche, þat special spece,[24]
Enclynande lowe in wommon lore,[25]
Caȝte of[26] her coroun of grete tresore,
And haylsed[27] me wyth a lote lyȝte.[28]

1 bright
2 hair
3 shoulders
4 lay
5 unbound
6 lightly
7 lacked
8 embroidered border
9 pierced (with open-work design)
10 opening
11 blemish
12 judgment
13 seriously
14 be baffled
15 enter into its measure of excellence
16 be equal to the task
17 sweet
18 recital
19 on the opposite side of
20 man
21 hence
22 was on the brink
23 closer (*perhaps* dearer)
24 rare being; MS. spyce
25 according to women's etiquette
26 caught off
27 greeted
28 manner blithe

Wel watz me þat ever I watz bore,
To sware[1] þat swete in perlez pyȝte!

'O perle,' quod I, 'in perlez pyȝt,
Art þou my perle þat I haf playned,[2]
Regretted[3] by myn one,[4] on nyȝte?
Much longeyng haf I for þe layned,[5]
Syþen into gresse[6] þou me aglyȝte[7];
Pensyf, payred,[8] I am forpayned,[9]
And þou in a lyf of lykyng[10] lyȝte,[11]
In paradys erde,[12] of stryf unstrayned.[13]
What wyrde[14] hatz hyder my juel[15] wayned,[16]
And don me in del[17] and gret daunger?
Fro[18] we in twynne[19] wern towen[20] and twayned[21]
I haf ben a joylez juelere.'

That juel þenne in gemmez gente[22]
Vered[23] up her vyse[24] wyth yȝen graye,
Set on hyr coroun of perle orient,
And soberly after þenne[25] con ho say:
'Sir, ȝe haf your tale mysetente,[26]
To say your perle is al awaye.
Þat is in cofer so comly clente,[27]
As in þis gardyn gracios[28] gaye,
Hereinne to lenge[29] for ever and play.
Þer mys nee mornyng[30] com never nere[31];
Her were a forser[32] for þe, in faye,[33]
If þou were a gentyl jueler.

[1] answer
[2] lamented
[3] grieved for
[4] by myself
[5] kept silent about
[6] the sod (grass)
[7] slipped away
[8] worn
[9] overcome with pain
[10] pleasure
[11] arrived
[12] the country of paradise
[13] unmolested
[14] fate
[15] jewel
[16] brought; MS. vayned
[17] sorrow; MS. þys del
[18] since
[19] in twain
[20] drawn
[21] torn apart
[22] precious
[23] turned
[24] face
[25] straightway
[26] heeded ill
[27] enclosed so beautifully
[28] delightful
[29] tarry
[30] where sin nor mourning
[31] MS. here
[32] treasure-chest
[33] indeed

hatz þou spoken at ene [1];
Unavysed,[2] forsoþe, wern alle þre;
Þou ne woste [3] in worlde [4] quat on dotz mene,[5]
Þy worde byfore þy wytte con fle.
Þou says þou trawez me in þis dene,
Bycawse þou may wyth yȝen me se;
Anoþer þou says, in þys countre
Þyself schal won wyth me ryȝt here;
Þe þrydde, to passe þys water fre —
Þat may no joyfol jueler. . . .'

'In blysse I se þe blyþely blent,[7]
And I a man al mornyf [8] mate [9];
Ȝe take þeron ful lyttel tente,[10]
Þaȝ I hente [11] ofte harmez hate.[12]
Bot now I am here in your presente,[13]
I wolde bysech wythouten debate
Ȝe wolde me say in sobre asente [14]
What lyf ȝe lede erly and late;
For I am ful fayn [15] þat your astate [16]
Is worþen [17] to worschyp and wele, iwysse
Of alle my joy þe hyȝe gate,[18]
Hit is in grounde [19] of alle my blysse.'

'Now blysse, burne,[20] mot þe bytyde,'
Þen sayde þat lufsoum of lyth and lere [21];
'And welcum here to walk and byde,
For now þy speche is to me dere;
Maysterful mod [22] and hyȝe pryde,
I hete [23] þe, arn heterly [24] hated here.

[1] one time
[2] ill considered
[3] knowest not
[4] at all
[5] a single one means (*lit.* does mean)
[6] valley
[7] joyously mingled
[8] mournful
[9] dejected
[10] heed
[11] experience
[12] burning
[13] presence
[14] compliance
[15] glad
[16] condition
[17] is turned
[18] road
[19] at the basis
[20] sir
[21] that one, lovely of limb and face
[22] temper
[23] assure
[24] bitter

My Lorde ne lovez not for to chyde,
For meke arn alle þat wonez hym nere;
And when in hys place þou schal apere,
Be dep devote[1] in hol[2] mekenesse;
My Lorde þe Lamb lovez ay such chere[3] —
Þat is þe grounde of alle my blysse.

'A blysful lyf þou says I lede;
Þou woldez knaw þerof þe stage.[4]
Þow wost wel when þy perle con schede[5]
I watz ful ȝong and tender of age;
Bot my Lorde þe Lombe, þurȝ hys Godhede,
He toke myself to hys maryage,
Corounde me quene in blysse to brede[6]
In lenghe of dayez þat ever schal wage[7];
And sesed in[8] alle hys herytage
Hys lef[9] is, I am holy hysse;
Hys prese,[10] hys prys,[11] and hys parage,[12]
Is rote and grounde of alle my blysse.'

GODRIC'S HYMNS

It is not for beauty of phrasing or loveliness of movement that these verses are remarkable. They are here printed because they are early (Godric died in 1170); because their author was illiterate; and because he had such a singular career. He was successively peddler, pirate, and palmer, before, at the age of forty or over, he turned to the hermit's life. He is described as broad-shouldered, with well-set, sinewy frame, and flowing beard; and his hair in earlier life was black. Of him, as of Chaucer's shipman, it might be said:

With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.

During his wandering life, he was for several years the master of a vessel plying between England, Scotland, Denmark, and Flanders; journeyed twice to Jerusalem, and on May 29, 1102, carried Baldwin I, King of Jerusalem, to Jaffa in his ship; and visited Rome, St. Giles in Provence, and Compostella. The

1 deeply devout
2 all
3 demeanor
4 degree of advancement
5 did fall
6 dwell
7 endure
8 put in possession of
9 precious one
10 worth
11 excellence
12 noble lineage

last sixty years of his life he spent at Finchale, near Durham. He knew a little French, and could read at least the Psalter in Latin. He 'had unique influence over animals. His heifer, the hare that was nibbling at his garden herbs, the frozen birds, the stag pursued by huntsmen, all found a friend in him' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*). In extreme old age he became clairvoyant, and 'would interrupt his conversation to utter prayers for the storm-tossed vessels of his dreams.' See Kingsley, *Hermits*; Alban Butler's and Baring-Gould's *Lives of the Saints*; and especially the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

The music of all three hymns, found in MS. Brit. Mus. Royal 5. F. 7, is reproduced as the frontispiece of Saintsbury's *History of English Prosody*, with a somewhat imperfect text.

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

This hymn was taught, as he believed, to Godric, by the Virgin Mary herself. The text is from Zupitza's edition (*Eng. Stud.* 11.423). The music to which it was sung is printed in Stevenson's edition of Reginald's life of the saint (Surtees Soc., Vol. 20), p. 288.

Sainte Marie, Virgine,
Moder Jesu Cristes Nazarene,
Onfo,[1] scild,[2] help þin[3] Godric,
Onfang,[1] bring hehlic[4] wið þe in Godes ric.[5]

Sainte Marie, Cristes bur,[6]
Maidenes clenhad,[7] moderes flur,[8]
Dilie[9] mine sinne, rixe[10] in min mod,
Bring me to winne[11] wið self God.

HYMN OF BURGWINE, GODRIC'S SISTER

Godric's sister had led a hermit's life in a cell near him at Finchale. After her death he was concerned about the state of her soul. One night he had a vision of the Virgin Mary followed by two men in white garments, and between them the spirit of his sister. They floated down upon the altar of his oratory, and his sister, standing upon the altar, sang the following lines (Zupitza, p. 429).

[1] receive
[2] protect
[3] thy
[4] gloriously
[5] kingdom
[6] bower; chamber (alluding to Ps. 19. 5, understood of Christ as the bridegroom)
[7] purity
[8] flower
[9] blot out
[10] reign
[11] bliss

The 'scamel,' or footstool, here refers to the altar, with allusion to 1 Chron. 28.3; Ps. 99.5; 132.7; Isa. 60.13; for the footstool may be identified with the mercy-seat of the old dispensation (Exod. 25.16–22), and hence with the altar in the Christian church.

Crist and Seinte Marie swa[1] on scamel me iledde[2]
þat Ic on þis erðe ne silde[3] wið mine bare fote itredie.[4]

HYMN TO ST. NICHOLAS

St. Nicholas is reported by his biographer, Reginald (ed. Stevenson, p. 202), to have once visited Godric in a dream at Eastertide, in company with angels descending to Christ's sepulchre, to have sung with them, and to have urged Godric to sing also, which he did. Our hymn, however, has no direct allusion to this occurrence.

The third line should, according to Zupitza (p. 430), be brought into direct relation with the end of the first ('God's darling at thy birth, at thy bier') — which indicates that Godric's literary technique left something to be desired.

Sainte Nicholæs, Godes druð,
Tymbre[5] us faire scone[6] hus —
At þi burth, at þi bare —
Sainte Nicholæs, bring us wel þare.[7]

I SIGH WHEN I SING

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 210–2

I syke[8] when Y singe,
For sorewe þat Y se,
When Y wiþ wypinge[9]
Biholde upon þe tre,
Ant se Jesu, þe suete,
Is[10] herte-blod forlete[11]
For þe love of me.
Ys[10] woundes waxen wete;
Þei wepen stille and mete[12];
Marie reweþ þe.

[1] so
[2] led
[3] should
[4] tread
[5] build
[6] beautiful
[7] there
[8] sigh
[9] weeping
[10] his
[11] lose
[12] gently

Ofte when Y sike
And makie my mon,
Wel ille þah me like[1]
Wonder is hit non;
When Y se honge heȝe,
Ant bittre pynes dreȝe,[2]
Jesu, my lemmon.[3]
His wondes sore smerte;
Þe spere al to [h]is herte
Ant þourh [h]is syde [i]s[4] gon.

Ofte when Y syke,
Wiþ care Y am þourhsoht[5];
When Y wake, Y wyke,[6]
Of serewe is al mi þoht.
Alas! men beþ wode[7]
Þat suereþ by þe rode,
And selleþ him for noht
Þat bohte us out of synne.
He bring[8] us to wynne[9]
Þat haþ us duere[10] boht!

A SONG TO THE VIRGIN

Thirteenth century. From MS. Brit. Mus. Egerton 613, printed by Morris, *Old English Miscellany* (E.E.T.S. 49), pp. 194-5.

Of on þat is so fayr and briȝt
Velut[11] *maris stella*,
Briȝter þan þe dayis liȝt,
Parens et puella.
Ic crie to þe; þou se[12] to me;
Levedy, preye þi Sone for me,
Tam pia,

1 if I like it full ill
2 suffer
3 darling
4 MS. sydes
5 pierced
6 grow weak
7 demented
8 subj.
9 bliss
10 dearly
11 MS. velud
12 look

Wel he wot[1] he is þi Sone,
Ventre quem portasti;
He wyl nout werne[2] þe þi bone,[3]
Parvum quem lactasti;
So hende[4] and so god he is,[5]
He havet[h] brou[h]t ous to blis
Superni
Þat havez hidut[6] þe foule put[7]
Inferni.

STAND WELL, MOTHER, UNDER ROOD

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 206–8

'Stond wel, moder, under rode,
Byhold[8] þy Sone wiþ glade mode;
Blyþe, moder, myht[9] þou be!'
'Sone, hou shulde Y blyþe stonde?
Y se þin fet, Y se þin honde,
Nayled to þe harde tre.'

'Moder, do wey[10] þy wepinge;
Y þole[11] deþ for monkynde,
For my gult þole Y non.'
'Sone, Y fele þe dede-stounde[12];
Þe suert is at myn herte grounde[13]
Þat me byhet[14] Symeon.'

'Moder, merci, let me deye,
For Adam out of helle [to] beye,
Ant his kun, þat is forlore.'

1 knows
2 deny
3 prayer, boon
4 gracious
5 MS. his
6 covered
7 pit
8 MS. -holt
9 mayst
10 away
11 suffer
12 death-pang
13 core
14 foretold

'Sone, what shal me to rede[1]?
My peyne pyneþ me to dede[2];
Lat me deȝe þe byfore.'

'Moder, þou rewe al of þi Bern[3];
þou wosshe awai þe blody tern,[4]
Hit doþ[5] me worse þen my ded.'
'Sone, hou may Y teres werne[6]?
Y se þe blody stremes erne[7]
From þin herte to my fet.'

'Moder, nou Y may þe seye,
Betere is þat Ich one[8] deye
þen[9] al monkunde to helle go.'
'Sone, Y se þi bodi bysw[o]ngen,[10]
Fet and honde þourhout stongen[11];
No wonder þah[12] me be wo.'

'Moder, nou Y shal þe telle,
Ȝef Y ne deȝe, þou gost to helle;
Y þole ded for þine sake.'
'Sone, þou art so meke and mynde,[13]
Ne wyt[14] me naht — hit is my kynde[15] —
þat Y for þe þis sorewe make.'

'Moder, nou þou miht wel leren[16]
Whet sorewe haveþ[17] þat children beren,
Whet sorewe hit is wiþ childe gon.'
'Sorewe? ywis,[18] Y con þe telle!
Bote[19] hit be þe pyne[20] of helle,
More serewe wot Y non.'

1 as advice
2 death
3 son
4 tears
5 affects
6 forbid
7 run
8 alone
9 than
10 em. B.
11 pierced
12 if
13 considerate
14 blame
15 nature
16 canst easily explai
17 they have
18 indeed
19 unless
20 pain

'Moder, rew of moder-kare,
For nou þou wost of moder-fare,[1]
  Þah[2] þou be clene mayden on.[3]'
'Sone, help at alle nede
Alle þo þat to me grede,[4]
  Maiden, wif, ant fol[5] wymmon.'

'Moder, may Y no lengore duelle,[6]
Þe time is come, Y shal[7] to helle;
  Þe þridde day Y ryse upon.'
'Sone, Y wil wiþ þe [be] founden;
Y deye, ywis, for þine wounden —
  So soreweful ded nes never non.'

When he ros, þo[8] fel hire sorewe,
Hire blisse sprong þe þridde morewe;
  Blyþe, moder, were þou þo!
Levedy, for þat ilke blisse,
Bysech þi Sone of sunnes lisse[9];
  Þou be oure sheld aȝeyn[10] oure fo.

Blessed be þou, ful of blysse!
Let us never hevene misse,
  Þourh þi[11] suete Sones myht.
Loverd, for þat ilke[12] blod
Þat þou sheddest on þe rod,
  Þou bryng us into hevene-lyht.

1 mother-doings
2 though; MS. þou
3 one, a; MS. mon
4 cry
5 foolish, loose
6 stay
7 must
8 then
9 sin's remission
10 against
11 MS. sourh þich (em. B.)
12 same

AS I RODE

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 218-9

Ase Y me rod, þis ender[1] day,
By grene wode to seche play,
Mid herte Y þohte al on a may,[2]
  Suetest of alle þinge;
Lyþe,[3] and Ich ou telle may
  Al of þat suete þinge.

Þis maiden is suete ant fre of blod,[4]
Briht and feyr, of milde mod;
Alle heo mai don us god
  Þurh hire bysechynge;
Of hire he tok fleysh and blod,
  Jesu Crist, hevene Kynge.

Wiþ al mi lif Y love þat may;
He is mi solas nyht and day,
My joie, and eke my beste play,[5]
  Ant eke my love-longynge;
Al þe betere me is þat day
  Þat Ich of hire synge.

Of alle þinge Y love hir mest,[6]
My dayes blis, my nyhtes rest,
Heo counseileþ and helpeþ best
  Boþe elde and ȝynge[7];
Nou Y may, ȝef Y wole,
  Þe fif joyes mynge.[8]

Þe furst joie of þat wymman[9] —
When Gabriel from hevene cam,

1 other
2 maid
3 listen
4 descent, parentage
5 delight
6 most
7 old and youn
8 mention
9 MS. wyn-

Ant seide God shulde bicome man,
  Ant of hire be bore,
And bringe up of helle pyn
  Monkyn[1] þat wes forlore.

Þat oþer[2] joie of þat may
Wes o[3] Cristesmasse day,
When God wes bore, on þorwe[4] lay,
  Ant brohte us lyhtnesse[5];
Þestri[6] wes seie[7] byfore day,
  Þis hirdes[8] bereþ wytnesse.

Þe þridde joie of þat levedy—
Þat men clepeþ þe Epyphany,
When þe kynges come, wery,
  To presente hyre Sone
Wiþ myrre, gold, and encenz,
  Þat[9] wes Mon bicome.

Þe furþe joie we telle mawen—
On Estermorewe, w[h]en[10] hit gon dawen,[11]
Hyre sone, þat wes slawen,
  Aros in fleysh and bon;
More joie ne mai me haven
  Wyf ne mayden non.

Þe fifte joie of þat wymman—
When hire body to hevene cam,
Þe soule to þe body nam,[12]
  Ase hit wes woned to bene.[13]
Crist, leve[14] us alle wiþ þat wymman
  Þat joie al for te sene.

[1] mankind
[2] second
[3] on
[4] manger
[5] light
[6] darkness
[7] seen
[8] shepherds
[9] who
[10] em. B.
[11] dawn
[12] joined
[13] be
[14] grant

Preye we alle to oure levedy,
Ant to þe sontes[1] þat woneþ[2] hire b
Þat heo[3] of us haven merci,
Ant þat we ne misse
In þis world to ben holy,
Ant wynne hevene blysse.

WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN OF MARY FREE

About 1456. From MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 5396, printed by Wright, *Specimens of Old Christmas Carols* (Percy Soc. 4), p. 32.

Christo paremus canticam,
[In] excelsis gloria.

When Cryst was born of Mary fre,[4]
In Bedlem in that fayre cyte,
Angellis song ther with myrth and gle:
In excelsis gloria.

Herdmen[5] beheld thes angellis bryȝt,
To hem apperyd wyth gret lyȝt,
And seyd: 'Goddys Sone is born this nyȝt;
In excelsis gloria.'

Thys king[6] ys comyn to save [man]kynde,
In the Scriptur[7] as we fynde;
Therfore this song have we in mynde:
In excelsis gloria.

Then, Lord, for thy gret[e] grace,
Graunt us the blys to se thy face,
Where we may syng to thy solas:
In excelsis gloria.

[1] saints
[2] dwell
[3] they
[4] noble
[5] shepherds
[6] MS. keng (em. Chambers and Sidgwick, *Early English Lyrics*)
[7] MS. as yn Sc[illegible] C. and S.)

AT CHRISTMAS, MAID MARY

About 1425. Sections 6 and 7 (lines 59–84) of *Festivals of the Church*, from MS. Brit. Mus. Royal 18 A. 10, printed by Morris, *Legends of the Holy Rood* (E.E.T.S. 46), pp. 212–3.

At Cristemasse, mayde Mary,
  þorowe helpe of þe Holy Goostis heste,[1]
þi Brid[2] was born, and lay þe by,
  Aboute boþe bynne[3] and beeste.
þe aungels maden melody
  For joye of Cristis feeste;
A clere note þei sang in þe sky
  Whan Kyngis Sone bare fleisshly creste.[4]
  Scheperdes, meest and leest,
'Joye to God full of love!'
Herden þei aungels synge above,
'Pes to man! þe devyll is drove[5]
  Fro Goddis trone in þe eest.'

þan myȝt þe mylde may[6] synge,
  Ysaye, þe woord of þee:
'þou seydest[7] a ȝerd schulde sprynge
  Oute of þe rote of jentill Jesse,
And schulde floure with florisschyng,
  With primeroses greet plente;
Into þe croppe[8] schulde come a Kyng
  þat is a Lord of power and pyte—
  My swete Sone I see!
I am þe ȝerde,[9] þou art þe Flour!
My Brid[10] is borne by[11] beest in boure;
My Primerose, my Paramour,[12]
  With love I lulle þee.'

1 bidding
2 son (*lit.* bird)
3 manger
4 crest, insignia
5 driven
6 maiden
7 Isa. 11. 1
8 topmost branch
9 shoot
10 child (*lit.* bird)
11 near
12 sweetheart

I SING OF A MAIDEN

About 1450. From MS. Brit. Mus. Sloane 2593, as printed by Fehr in *Herrig's Archiv* 109. 50.

I syng of a mayden
  þat is makeles[1];
Kyng of alle kynges
  To here Sone [s]che[2] ches.[3]
He cam also[4] stylle
  þere[5] his moder was
As dew[6] in Aprylle
  þat fallyt on þe gras;
He cam also stylle
  To his moderes bowr
As dew in Aprille
  þat fallyt on þe flour;
He cam also stylle
  þere his moder lay
As dew in Aprille
  þat fallyt on þe spray;
Moder and maydyn
  Was never non but [s]che[2];
Wel may swych a lady
  Godes moder be.

LULLAY, MY CHILD

About 1460–1490. From MS. Bodl. Eng. Poet. e. 1, printed by Wright in *Songs and Carols* (Percy Soc. 73), p. 19.

Lullay, my Child, and wepe no more;
  Slepe, and be now styll;
The King of blys thy Fader ys,
  As it was hys wyll.

[1] matchless
[2] MS. che (em. Chambers and Sidgwick)
[3] chose
[4] as
[5] where
[6] Cf. Ps. 72. 6

This endrys[1] nyȝt I saw a syȝt[2]—
A mayd a cradyll kepe—
And ever she song, and seyd among:
'Lullay, my child, and slepe.'

'I may not slepe, but I may wepe,
I am so wo begone;
Slep I [w]old, butt I am colde,
And clothys have I none.'

Me thouȝt I hard[3] the Chyld answard,
And to hys moder he sayd:
'My moder der, what do I her,
In cribbe why am I layd?

I was borne, and layd beforne
Bestys, both ox and asse;
My moder mild, I am thy Child,
But he my Fader was.

Adam's gylt this man had spylt[4];
That sin grevet[h] me sore.
Man, for the her shall I be
Thyrty wynter and mor.

Dole[5] is to se, her shall I be
Hang[ed] upon the rode;
With baleis[6] tobete,[7] my woundes towete,[8]
And ȝeffe my fleshe to bote.[9]

Here shall I be hanged on a tre,
And dye, as it is skyll[10];
That I have bouȝt leese[11] wyll I nouȝt;
It is my Faders will.

1 other
2 MS. syȝth
3 heard
4 ruined
5 MS. dole it
6 scourge
7 smitten
8 dripping
9 atonement
10 proper, right
11 lose; MS. lesse

[illegible] so scharp shall perse my hert
For [illegible]dys that I have done;
[illegible] of grace, wher[1] thou hase
[illegible]yn thy lytyll Sonne?

Withouten pety[2] her shall aby,[3]
And mak my fleshe all blo.[4]
Adam, iwys, this deth it ys
For the and many mo.'

THE SHEPHERD UPON A HILL HE SAT

About 1500 (or earlier). From MS. Oxford Balliol 354, as printed by Flü[gel] in *Angl.* 26. 243–5 (cf. *Neueng. Lesebuch*, pp. 117–9), with *þ* for MS. *y*. 554 24 ff.

Can I not syng but 'Hoy!'
Whan the joly shepard made so mych joy.

The shepard upon a hill he satt;
He had on hym his tabard[5] and his hat,
Hys tarbox, his pype, and hys flagat[6];
Hys name was called Joly, Joly Wat,
For he was a gud herdesboy.
Ut hoy!
For in hys pype he made so mych joy.

The shepard upon a hill was layd;
Hys doge to hys gyrdyll was tayd.[7]
He had not slept but a lytill brayd[8]
But[9] *Gloria in excelsis* was to hym sayd.
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

[1] whether
[2] pity
[3] expiate
[4] livid
[5] loose upper garment without sleeves
[6] flask, bottle
[7] tied
[8] while; MS. broyd (em.
[9] when

The shepard [up]on a hill he stode;
Rownd abowt hym his shepe they yode.[1]
He put hys hond under hys hode,[2]
He saw a star as rede as blod.
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

'Now farwell, Mall, and also Will,
For my love go ye all styll
Unto[3] I cum agayn you till[4];
And evermore, [W]ill,[5] ryng well thy bell.
Ut hoy!'
For in his pipe he mad so mych joy.

'Now must I go þer[6] Cryst was borne;
Farewell, I cum agayn to-morn[7];
Dog, kepe well my shep fro þe corn,
And warn well warroke[8] when I blow my horn.
Ut hoy!'
For in hys pipe he made so mych joy.

Whan Wat to Bedlem cum[en] was,
He swet — he had gon faster than a pace[9];
He fownd Jesu in a sympyll place,
Betwen an ox and an asse.
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he mad so mych joy.

The shepard sayd anon ryght:
'I will go se yon farly[10] syght,
Wheras þe angell syngith on hight,[11]
And the star þat shynyth so bryght.
Ut hoy!'
For in [his][12] pipe he made so mych joy.

1 went
2 hood (to lift it up)
3 until
4 to
5 em. F.
6 where
7 to-morrow
8 (?)
9 walk
10 wondrous
11 high
12 em. F.

Jesu, I offer to the here my pype,
My skyrte,[1] my tarbox, and my scrype[2];
Home to my felowes now will I skype,
And also loke unto my shepe.
Ut hoy!'
For[3] in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

'Now farewell, myne owne herdesman, Wat!'
'Ye, for God, lady, even so I hat[4];
Lull well Jesu in thy lape,
And farewell, Joseph, wyth thy rownd cape.
Ut hoy!'
For in hys pipe he mad so myche joy.

Now may I well both hope[5] and syng,
For[3] I have bene a[t] Crystes beryng[6];
Home to my felowes now wyll I flyng.[7]
Cryst of hevyn to his blis us bryng!
Ut hoy!'
For in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

JUDAS

About 1300 (*New Eng. Dict.* s.v. *plate*). From MS. Camb. Trin. Coll. I 14-39 (photograph in my possession); cf. Child, *English and Scottish Popula* *Ballads*, No. 23. The manuscript has *y* for *þ* and *-st(e)* for *-ʒt(e)*; it is otherwis carelessly written (*wid* for *wiþ*, *wou* for *hou* (?)), etc., but I have made very few emendations, though one is tempted to change *aros* to *aras*, for instance. Mirk (about 1400?) says (*Festial*, E.E.T.S., Ex. Ser. 96, p. 79): 'Judas had befor slayne his owne fadyr, and bylayn hys owne modyr.'

Hit wes upon a Scere þorsday þat ure Loverd aros;
Ful milde were þe wordes he spec to Judas:

[1] (?); MS. scrype (em. Flügel)
[2] scrip; MS. skyrte (em. Flügel)
[3] MS. ffor
[4] am called
[5] hop
[6] birth
[7] rush

19. Scere þorsday: Maundy Thursday; Mirk explains (*Festial*, p. 125): 'In old fadyrs dayes, men wold þat day make scher hom honest, and dodde hor heddys, and clyp hor berdys, and so make hom onest aʒeynes Astyr-day. For, on the morow, þay wold do hor body non ese, but suffyr penance yn mynd of hym þat suffred so hard for hom'; cf. p. 169.

'Judas, þou most to Jurselem, oure mete for to bugge[1];
Þritti platen[2] of selver þou bere upo þi rugge.[3]

Þou comest fer i[4] þe brode stret, fer i þe brode strete;
Summe of þine tunesmen þer þou meiȝt imete.[5]'

Imette wid is soster,[6] þe swikele[7] wimon.
'Judas, þou were wrþe[8] me[9] stende[10] þe wid ston,

[Judas, þou were wrþe me stende þe wid ston,]
For þe false prophete þat tou bilevest upon.'

'Be stille, leve soster, þin herte þe tobreke[11]!
Wiste[12] min Loverd,[13] Crist, ful wel he wolde be wreke.[14]'

'Judas, go þou on þe roc, heie upon þe ston;
Lei þin heved i my barm,[15] slep þou þe anon.'

Sone so[16] Judas of slepe was awake,
Þritti platen of selver from hym weren itake.

He drou[17] hymselve bi þe cop,[18] þat al [h]it lavede[19] a[20] blode;
Þe Jewes out of Jurselem awenden[21] he were wode.

Foret[22] hym com þe riche Jeu þat heiȝte[23] Pilatus.
'Wolte sulle[24] þi Loverd, þat hette[25] Jesus?'

'I nul[26] sulle my Loverd for nones cunnes eiȝte,[27]
Bote hit be for þe þritti platen þat he me bitaiȝte.[28]'

1 buy
2 Wyclif has "plates," Matt. 26. 15, etc.
3 back
4 in
5 meet
6 sister
7 treacherous
8 deserving
9 (that) one
10 stoned
11 break, subj.
12 if . . . knew (it)
13 lord
14 avenged
15 lap
16 as soon as
17 drew
18 head
19 was bathed
20 in
21 thought
22 forth
23 was called
24 wilt thou sell
25 is called
26 will not
27 no kind of property
28 entrusted

'Wolte sulle þi Lord, Crist, for enes cunnes golde?'
'Nay, bote hit be for þe platen þat he habben wolde.'

In him[1] com ur Lord gon, as [h]is postles seten at mete.
'Wou[2] sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye ete?

[Wou sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye ete?]
Ic am ibouȝt ant isold to-day for oure[3] mete.'

Up stod him Judas: 'Lord, am I þat?
I nas never o þe stude[4] þer me[5] þe evel spec.[6]'

Up him stod Peter, ant spec wid al is miȝte:
'Þau[7] Pilatus him come wid ten hundred cniȝtes,

[Þau Pilatus him com wid ten hundred cniȝtes,]
Yet Ic wolde, Loverd, for þi love fiȝte.'

'Still þou be, Peter! wel I þe icnowe[8];
Þou wolt fursake me þrien[9] ar þe coc him crowe.'

ST. STEPHEN AND HEROD

About 1450. From MS. Brit. Mus. Sloane 2593, as printed by Child, *Ballads*, No. 22.

Seynt Stevene was a clerk in Kyng Herowdes halle,
And servyd him of bred and cloþ,[10] as every kyng befalle

Stevyn out of kechone cam, wyth boris hed on honde;
He saw a sterre was fayr and bryȝt over Bedlem stonde

[1] refl.
[2] how (is it that); *or read* wi?
[3] your
[4] place
[5] any one
[6] spake
[7] though
[8] know
[9] thrice
[10] tablecloth

7. þat: Mätzner (*Altengl. Sprachproben* I. 114) suggests *wrech* after this word; but would the *c* of *spec* be palatal?

He kyst[1] adoun þe boris hed, and went into þe halle.
'I forsak þe, Kyng Herowdes, and þi werkes alle.

'I forsak þe, Kyng Herowdes, and þi werkes alle;
Þer is a chyld in Bedlem born is beter þan we alle.'

'Quat eylyt[2] þe, Stevene? quat[3] is þe befalle?
Lakkyt[4] þe eyþer mete or drynk in Kyng Herowdes halle?'

'Lakit me neyþer mete ne drynk in Kyng Herowdes halle;
Þer is a chyld in Bedlem born is beter þan we alle.'

'Quat eylyt þe, Stevyn? art þu wod,[5] or þu gynnyst to brede[6]?
Lakkyt þe eyþer gold or fe, or ony ryche wede[7]?'

'Lakyt me neyþer gold ne fe, ne non ryche wede;
Þer is a chyld in Bedlem born xal[8] helpyn us at our nede.'

'Þat is al so soþ, Stevyn, al so soþ, iwys,
As þis capoun crowe xal þat lyþ here in myn dysh.'

Þat word was not so sone seyd, þat word in þat halle,
Þe capoun crew *Cristus natus est!* among þe lordes alle.

'Rysyt[9] up, myn turmentowres, be to[10] and al[s][11] be on,
And ledyt Stevyn out of þis town, and stonyt hym wyth ston!'

Tokyn he[12] Stevene, and stonyd hym in the way,
And þerfore is his evyn[13] on Crystes owyn day.

1 cast
2 ails
3 what
4 fails
5 mad
6 be pregnant (?)
7 garment
8 shall
9 rise (imp.)
10 by two
11 also
12 they took
13 eve, vigil

CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO VENUS

Troilus and Criseyde 3. 1–14, which is translated from Boccaccio's *Filostrato* 3. 585–600:

O luce eterna, il cui lieto splendore
Fa bello il terzo ciel, dal qual ne piove
Piacer, vaghezza, pietade ed amore;
Del sole amica, e figliuola di Giove,
Benigna donna d' ogni gentil core,
Certa cagion del valor che mi muove
A' sospir dolci della mia salute,
Sempre lodata sia la tua virtute.

Il ciel, la terra, lo mare e l' inferno
Ciascuno in sè la tua potenzia sente,
O chiara luce; e s' io il ver discerno,
Le piante, i semi, e l' erbe puramente,
Gli uccei, le fiere, i pesci con eterno
Vapor ti senton nel tempo piacente,
E gli uomini e gli dei, nè creatura
Senza di te nel mondo vale o dura.

For an extended comment, see my article, *Herrig's Archiv* 119 (1907). 40–54.

O blisful light, of whiche the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thridde hevene[1] faire;
O sonnes leef, O Joves doughter dere,
Plesaunce of love, O goodly, debonaire,[2]
In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire;
O verray cause of hele[3] and of gladnesse,
Yheried[4] be thy might and thy goodnesse!

In hevene and helle, in erthe and salte see
Is felt thy might, if that I wel descerne;
As man, brid, best, fish, herbe, and grene tree
Thee fele in tymes with vapour[5] eterne.
God loveth, and to love wol nought werne[6];
And in this world no lyves[7] creature,
Withouten love, is worth, or may endure.

[1] that of Venus
[2] gracious
[3] well-being
[4] praised, exalted
[5] inspiration
[6] forbid
[7] living

CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO THE TRINITY

Troilus and Criseyde 5. 1863–1869. The first three lines are from Dante, *Paradiso* 14. 28–30:

Quell' uno e due e tre che sempre vive,
E regna sempre in tre e due ed uno,
Non circonscritto, e tutto circonscrive.

Thou oon, and two, and three, eterne onlyve,[1]
That regnest ay in three and two and oon,
Uncircumscript, and al mayst circumscryve,
Us from visible and invisible foon
Defende; and to thy mercy, everychoon,
So make us, Jesus, for thy grace digne,[2]
For love of mayde and moder thyn benigne!

[1] in life, living [2] worthy

PLAYS

THE CLERIC AND THE MAIDEN

This fragmentary 'interlude,' belonging to the thirteenth century, is the first English comedy, and the only one extant from the Middle Ages. It wa printed by Wright from a manuscript then in private hands, but now MS. Brit Mus. Add. 23,986, written about 1300 by a French scribe. A more critical editio is by Heuser (*Anglia* 30. 306–19). According to the latter, the dialect indicate south Yorkshire or north Lincolnshire; as there is mention in *Dame Sirit* (see above, p. 145) of Boston, in Lincolnshire, the two works belong to th same region, though the manuscript of *Dame Sirith* hails from Worceste Heuser assumes that both works rest upon a lost interlude. He concludes:

1. *Dame Sirith* was originally written in rhyming couplets.

2. *Dame Sirith* has only 47 narrative lines (24 of these at the beginning out of 450, and these occur almost exclusively when a new character enters everything indicates that it was an interlude before it was a fabliau.

3. *Dame Sirith* and our interlude are akin in subject, dramatic characte verse, dialect, and occasionally in phraseology; hence both repose upon thirteenth-century interlude.

4. Various changes of the original appear in *Dame Sirith* (narrative add tions, verse, dialect), so that our interlude does not spring from the fablia In the interlude the deceived woman is a girl, not, as in every other versio a wife; hence the fabliau does not spring from the present interlude. It i likely that each author worked, not from a manuscript, but from his ow recollection of the acted interlude.

5. The names throw no light upon a possible French origin. For (*a*) as th scribe was French (Heuser, p. 310), the saints, Michel and Dinis, signif nothing; (*b*) Mome Elwis and Malkyn are English names; the Margeri *Dame Sirith* is French, but must have been used in England; the Willeki of *Dame Sirith* is English; Sirith is Scandinavian (= Sigrith); the Nelde *Dame Sirith* is hardly a proper name, but possibly from OE. *eald*, old. Elwi or Helwys, points to the eastern part of England, where there occur suc family-names as Helwys and Elwes.

With respect to Heuser's (5), the indications are that behind the *Clericus* *Puella* there was a French original. Malkyn has a termination borrowed fro Dutch or Low German, but the first syllable is from the French Matilda (no that the wife of Henry I changed her original name of Eadgyth, Edith, Matilda). Mone (MS. Mome) is borrowed from Scandinavian or Dutch. Th other names point clearly to France: to the saints, Michael and Denis, ac

Leonard (cf. above, p. 387), who is associated with the vicinity of Limoges; and Elwis is surely the French Heluis (Helois, Heluiz, Helui, Heloi, Eluys), which is frequently found in the French feudal epic before 1180 — thirteen times in *Garin le Lorrain*, for instance (Langlois, *Table des Noms Propres dans les Chansons de Geste*, pp. 329–30); compare Chaucer's 'Helowys' in *Wife of Bath's Prologue* 677, referring to the mistress of Abelard. Then *fayllard*, 477 8 (following its noun), is French, like the *boinard* of *Dame Sirith* (152 19). As to *Dame Sirith*, the name Margeri is French, as we have seen; Willekin has the same ending as Malkyn; and Nelde (rather, nelde) represents a variant spelling of 'needle' (the one crone may have ostensibly supported herself with her needle, as the other with her distaff).

Compare the *Debate of the Cleric and the Maiden*, pp. 418–20, above.

The interlude begins: *Hic incipit Interludium de Clerico et Puella*, and these names are retained throughout the stage-directions; I have substituted *Cler.* and *Maid.* I have also supplied the headings for the scenes, and made several emendations.

The manuscript commonly represents initial *þ* (and occasionally ȝ) by *y*; I have restored the original forms. It also confounds *w* and *v*, supplies and omits *h* at random, etc.

SCENE I

MAIDEN'S *home. Enter* CLERIC *and* MAIDEN

Cler. Damisel,[1] reste wel!
Maid. Sir, welcum, by Saynt Michel!
Cler. Wer es ty[2] sire? Wer es ty dame?
Maid. By Gode, es noþer[3] her at hame.
Cler. Wel wor suilc a man to life,
Þat suilc a may mihte[4] have to wyfe[5]!
Maid. Do way, by Crist and Leonard!
No wil Y lufe na clerc fayllard[6];
Na kep[7] I herbherg[8] clerc in huse no[9] y[10] flore,[11]
Bot[12] his hers[13] ly wituten[14] dore.
Go forth þi way, god sire,
For[15] her hastu losyt[16] al þi hire.[17]

1 MS. damishel
2 thy (*t* for *th*, as elsewhere)
3 neither
4 MS. mithe
5 Cf. 145 7–8
6 deceitful
7 care
8 to harbor
9 nor
10 on
11 Cf. 145 27
12 unless
13 rump
14 outside the
15 MS. ff., and always below as initial
16 MS. losye; cf. 147 5
17 MS. wile; cf. *Childhood of Jesus* 1384 (ca. 1300) in Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden*, 1875: 'Elles we leosez boþe ore ȝwile and huyre.'

Cler. Nu, nu, by Crist and by Sant Jhon,
In al þis land ne wist I none,
Mayden, þat Hi luf mor þan þe;
Hif me micht ever þe better[1] be!
For þe Hy sory[2] nicht and day;
Y may say, 'Hay,[3] wayleuay!'
Y luf þe mar[4] þan mi lif;
Þu hates me mar þan gayt[5] dos cnif[6] —
Þat es noutt[7] for mysgilt.[8]
Certes,[9] for þi luf ham Hi spilt.[10]
A, suyte[11] mayden, reu of me,[12]
Þat es ty luf, hand ay sal be!
For þe luf of þ[e] mod[er][13] of hevene,[14]
Þu mend þi mode,[15] and her my stevene.[16]
Maid. By Crist of hevene, and Sant Jon[17]!
Clerc of scole ne kep[18] I non,
For many god wymman haf þai don scam[e] —
By Crist, þu michtis haf be[19] at hame[20]!
Cler. Syn[21] it n[on] oþir[22] gat[23] may be,
Jesu Crist[24] bytech[25] Y þe,
And send[e][26] neulic[27] bot[28] tharinne,
Þat Y[29] be lesit[30] of al my pine.[31]
Maid. Go nu, truan,[32] go nu, go,
For mikel þu canst[33] of sory and wo!

1 MS. bether
2 sorrow
3 alas
4 more
5 goat; MS. yayt (ȝayt?)
6 knife; MS. chuief (em. Heuser)
7 not
8 misdeed
9 MS. certhes
10 undone
11 sweet; MS. suythe
12 Cf. 146 12
13 MS. y mod (em. H.)
14 MS. efne
15 Cf. 146 11
16 cry
17 MS. Jone
18 care for
19 been
20 Cf. 147 6
21 MS. synt
22 MS. noþir; cf. 480 10
23 way
24 dat.
25 commend; MS. bytethy (em. H.)
26 may he send
27 soon; MS. neulit (em. H.)
28 amendment, help
29 MS. yi
30 freed
31 woe
32 vagabond
33 MS. canstu

SCENE II

ELWIS' *home.* *Enter* CLERIC *and* ELWIS

Cler. God te blis,[1] mone[2] Helwis.
Mone[2] *Elwis.* Son, welcum, by San Dinis[3]!
Cler. Hic am comin[4] to þe, mone[5];
Þu hel[6] me noht,[7] þu say me sone.
Hic am a clerc þat hauntes[8] scole;
Y led[9] my lif wyt mikel dole[10];
Me wor lever to be ded[11]
Þan led the lif þat Hyc led,[12]
For an[13] mayden wit[14] and schen[15]—
Fayrer ho[16] lond hav[17] Y non sen.[18]
Ȝo[19] hat[20] mayden Malkyn, Y wene—
Nu þu wost quam[21] Y mene;
Ȝo wonys at the tounes ende,
Þat suyt lif, so fayr and hende[22];
Bot-if ȝo wil hir mod amende,
Neuly Crist my ded me send[e][23]!
Men send[24] me hyder, wytuten[25] fayle,
To haf þi help an[d] ty cunsayle.[26]
Þarfor am Y cummen here,
Þat þu salt be my herandbere,[27]
To mac me and þat mayden sayct,[28]
And Hi sal gef þe of myn ayct,[29]
So þat hever, al þi lyf,
Saltu be þe better[30] wyf;

1 bless; cf. 148 4
2 aunt; MS. mome (see note 5)
3 Cf. 148 10
4 come
5 MS. mome (mone rhymes with sone, 'soon,' in Gower, *Conf. Am.* I. 97)
6 conceal
7 nothing; MS. noth
8 frequent
9 lead; MS. lydy
10 Cf. 148 17–18
11 MS. dedh
12 MS. ledh
13 MS. ay
14 white; MS. with
15 beautiful
16 on, in
17 MS. haw
18 MS. syen
19 she; MS. yo
20 is named
21 whom
22 gracious
23 opt.
24 they (one) sent
25 MS. vyt-
26 Cf. 149 1–2
27 messenger
28 at one; cf. 150 8
29 property
30 richer

So help me Crist — and [1] Hy may spede,
Riche [2] saltu haf þi mede! [3]
Mone [4] *Ellwis.* A, son, wat [5] saystu? Benedicite [6]!
Lift hup þi hand, and blis þe!
For it es boyt [7] syn and scam[e]
Þat þu on me hafs layt thys blam[e];
For Hic am an ald [8] quyne [9] and a lam[e], [10]
Y led my lyf wit Godis gram[e] [11];
Wit my roc [12] Y me fede;
Can I do non othir dede
Bot my Pater Noster and my Crede [13]
(To say Crist for missedede),
And myn Avy Mary
(For my synnes [14] Hic am sory),
And my *De Profundis*
(For al that yn sin lys);
For can I me non oþir þing, [15]
Þat wot Crist, of hevene Kyng. [16]
Jesu Crist, of hevene hey,
Gef [17] that þay may heng hey,
And gef þat Hy may se
Þat þay be heng on a tre
Þat þis ley as leyit [18] me onne, [19]
For aly [20] wyman am I on. [21] . . .

[1] if
[2] richly
[3] Cf. 149 5
[4] MS. mome
[5] MS. vat
[6] *Pron.* bencitee; cf. 149 7
[7] both
[8] old
[9] quean
[10] Cf. 149 10–13
[11] anger; MS. love (em. suggested by H.; cf. *grome*, 149 11)
[12] distaff
[13] Cf. 149 21–23
[14] MS. scynnes
[15] MS. þ
[16] MS. k
[17] grant
[18] lie hav
[19] MS. o
[20] holy:
[21] one

THE CHESTER NOAH'S FLOOD

Even as early as the fourth century, Greek Christian preachers introduced dramatic dialogue into their sermons, no doubt under the influence of the dramatic tradition which had been perpetuated from the classic age; and they were imitated by certain of the Latin Fathers. Such dialogue is found, again, in the *Christ* of the Old English poet, Cynewulf. Thus, before the ritual of the Church developed into the beginnings of the miracle-play, the dramatic element in Scriptural narrative had been accentuated in both the East and the West (Cook, 'A Remote Analogue to the Miracle Play,' in *Jour. Eng. and Germ. Phil.* 4 (1903). 421–51; cf. 5. 62–4).

In the tenth century, the *Concordia Regularis* of St. Æthelwold (A.D. 965–975), in the ceremony for the third nocturn at matins on Easter morning, directs three brethren to represent the women who go to the sepulchre, and one the angel seated at the door of the tomb. As they approach, the angel says: *Quem quæritis in sepulchro, O Christicolæ?* To which the three reply: *Jesum Nazarenum crucifixum.* And he answers: *Non est hic; surrexit, sicut prædixerat. Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis*, etc. (Chambers, *Mediæval Stage* 2. 308; cf. Gayley, *Plays of Our Forefathers*, pp. 17–8).

The rise and progress of the miracle-play are well sketched by Jusserand (*Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1. 456 ff.):

'The imitation of any action is a step towards drama. Conventional, liturgical, ritualistic as the imitation was, still there was an imitation in the ceremony of mass; and mass led to the religious drama, which was therefore, at starting, as conventional, liturgical, and ritualistic as could be. Its early beginning is to be sought for in the antiphoned parts of the service, and then it makes one with the service itself. . . . A great step was made when, at the principal feasts of the year, Easter and Christmas, the chanters, instead of giving their responses from their stalls, moved in the Church to recall the action commemorated on that day; additions were introduced into the received text of the service; religious drama begins then to have an existence of its own. "Tell us, shepherds, whom do you seek in this stable?"—They will answer: "Christ the Saviour, our Lord." Such is the starting-point; it dates from the tenth century; from this is derived the play of Shepherds, of which many versions have come down to us. . . .

'Verse replaced prose; the vulgar idiom replaced Latin; open air and the public square replaced the church nave and its subdued light. It was no longer necessary to have recourse to priests wearing a dalmatic in order to represent midwives; the feminine parts were performed by young boys dressed as women. . . .

'The religious drama was on the way to lose its purely liturgical character when the conquest of England had taken place. Under the reign of the Norman and Angevin kings, the taste for dramatic performances increased considerably; within the first century after Hastings we find them numerous

and largely attended. The oldest representation the memory of which has come down to us took place at the beginning of the twelfth century. . . . A little later in the same century, Fitzstephen, who wrote under Henry II, mentions as a common occurrence the "representations of miracles" held in London. In the following century, under Henry III, some were written in the English language. During the fourteenth century, in the time of Chaucer, mysteries were at the height of their popularity. . . .

'In a more or less complete state, the collections of the Mysteries performed at Chester, Coventry, Woodkirk, and York have been preserved, without speaking of fragments of other series. Most of those texts belong to the fourteenth century, but have been retouched at a later date. Old Mysteries did not escape the hand of the improvers, any more than old churches, where any one who pleased added paintings, porches, and tracery, according to the fashion of the day. . . .

'Once emerged from the Church, the drama had the whole town in which to display itself; and it filled the whole town. On these days the city belonged to dramatic art; each company had its cars or scaffolds, *pageants* (placed on wheels in some towns), each car being meant to represent one of the places where the events in the play happened. The complete series of scenes was exhibited at the main crossings, or on the principal squares or open spaces in the town. . . .

'While in the theatre of Bacchus the tragedies of Sophocles were played once and no more, the Christian drama, remodeled from century to century, was represented for four hundred years before immense multitudes; and this is a unique phenomenon in the history of literature.'

According to Gayley (*op. cit.*, pp. 132–3; cf. pp. 128–31) the Chester cycle, at least in part, was in existence in the first third of the fourteenth century, and its present form probably represents a revision made not far from 1400 (see also Ten Brink, *English Literature* 2.[1]274; Hemingway, *English Nativity Plays*, pp. xix–xxi; Pollard, *English Miracle Plays*, p. xxxvi; Cook, in *Nation* of May 27, 1915, p. 599). The manuscripts, five in number, are, however, much later (1591–1604).

Pollard thus characterizes these plays (p. xxxvii): 'There is less in the Chester plays to jar on modern feelings than in any other of the cycles. The humor is kept more within bounds, the religious tone is far higher.' Of the *Noah's Flood*, Gayley says (p. 151): 'The characters are distinct and consistently developed. The comic episodes are natural and justifiable, for they serve to display, not to distort, character, and they grow out of the dramatic action. They are, moreover, varied, and, to some extent, cumulative.' Chaucer thus alludes to the stubbornness of Noah's wife (*Miller's Tale* 352–7):

'Hastow nat herd,' quod Nicholas, 'also
The sorwe of Noe with his felawshipe,
Er that he mighte gete his wyf to shipe?
Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,
At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres blake,
That she hadde had a ship hirself allone.

Our text is based upon MS. Harl. 2124 (H.), as printed by Deimling (E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. 62. 48–63), with certain stage-directions and variants from MS. Bodley 175 (B.), as contained in Deimling's edition, and from MS. Brit. Mus. Add. 10,305 (W.), as printed by Thomas Wright in 1843. For the Latin names of the characters, *Noe*, etc., I have substituted the corresponding English ones.

There is a duplication of the dumb show of making the ark, of the command to take the beasts by sevens, and of the comic episode of Noah's wife; this looks as though two drafts had been rather clumsily patched together.

There are emendations by Kölbing in *Engl. Stud.* 16. 280; 21. 163.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

GOD

NOAH	NOAH'S WIFE
SHEM	SHEM'S WIFE
HAM	HAM'S WIFE
JAPHETH	JAPHETH'S WIFE

First, in some heigh place or in the cloudes, yf it may be, GOD *speaketh unto* NOE, *standing without the arke, with all his family:*[1]

God. I, God, that all the world have wrought,
Heaven and earth, and all of nought,
I see my people, in deede and thought,
Are sett[e] fowle in sinne.
My Ghost shall not lenge[2] in mon[3] —
That through fleshlie liking is my fone[4].—
But[5] till vi skore yeares be gone,
To loke if they will blynne.[6]

Manne that I made I will destroy,
Beast, worme, and fowle to flie,
For on earthe they doe me n[o]ye[7] —
The folke that are theron;

[1] From B.; the corresponding Latin is in H.
[2] remain (Vulg. *permanebit*)
[3] MS. man; W. mone
[4] foes (plural, because *man* is used collectively)
[5] except
[6] cease; see Gen. 6. 3, 5
[7] cause me annoyance

Hit harmes me so hartfullie[1] —
The malyce that now[2] can[3] multeply —
That sore it greveth me inwardlie
That ever I made mon.[4]

Therfore, Noe, my servant free.
That righteous man art, as I see,
A shipp sone thou shalt make the,
Of trees drye and lighte;
Little chambers therein thou make,
And bynding slich[5] also thou take;
Within and out thou ne slake[6]
To noynte[7] it through thy[8] mighte.[9]

300 cubytes it shall be long,
And 50 of breadth,[10] to mak it stronge;
Of heighte 30[11]; the mete[12] thou fonge,[13]
Thus measure it about.
One wyndow worch, through thy wytte;
One cubyte of length and breadth[10] make it.
Upon the side a dore shall sit,
For to come in and out.[14]

Eating-places thou make also:
Three-roofed chambers one or two;
For with water I thinke to slowe[15]
Man that I can make;
Destroyed all the world shal be
Save thou, thy wife, thy sonnes three,
And all there wives also with thee
Shall saved be for thy sake.[16]

[1] at the heart
[2] MS. now that
[3] doth
[4] MS. manne; see Gen. 6.6
[5] pitch
[6] fail
[7] MS. anoynte
[8] MS. all thy
[9] Gen. 6. 14
[10] MS. bredeth
[11] MS. 50
[12] measure
[13] take
[14] Gen. 6. 16
[15] slay
[16] Gen. 6. 16–18

Noah. Ah Lord, I thanke the lowd and still,
That to me art in such will,
And spares me and my house to spill,[1]
As now I sothlie fynde.
Thy bydding, Lord, I shall fulfill,
And never more the greeve ne grill,[2]
That suche grace has sent me till[3]
Among all mankinde.

Have done, yow men and women all;
Helpe, for ought that may befall,
To worke this shipp, chamber and hall,
As God hath bydden us doe.
Shem. Fader,[4] I am already bowne[5];
Anne axe I have, by my crowne[6]!
As sharpe as any in all this towne,
For to goe thereto.

Ham. I have a hatchet wonder kene,
To byte well, as may be seene;
A better grownden, as I weene,
Is not in all this towne.
Japheth. And I can well make a pyn,
And with this hammer knock yt in;
Goe and worche without more dynne;
And I am ready bowne.

Noah's Wife. And we shall bring tymber to,
For wee nothing els mon[7] doe;
Women be weake to underfoe
Any great travayle.
Shem's Wife. Here is a good hackstock[8];
On this yow maye hew and knock;

1 destroy
2 offend
3 to me
4 MS. father
5 prepared
6 head
7 may; MS. mon nothing els
8 chopping-block

Shall non be idle in this flock,
Ne now may no man fayle.

Ham's Wife. And I will goe to gather sliche,
The ship for to caulke [1] and piche;
Anoynt [2] yt must be every stich —
Board, tree, and pyn.

Japheth's Wife. And I will gather chippes here,
To make a fire for yow in feere,[3]
And for to dight[e] [4] your dynner,
Against [that] yow come in.[5]

Then NOYE *begineth to builde the arcke; and speaketh* NOYE: [6]

Noah. Now, in Gods name,[7] I will begin
To make the shippe that we shall in,[8]
That we be ready for to swym
At the cominge of the flood.
These bordes I joyne here togeder,[9]
To kepe us safe from the wedder,
That we may row both hider [10] and thider,
And safe be from this floode.

Of this tree will I make the mast,
Tyde with cables [11] that will last,
With a sayleyarde for each blast,
And each thinge in ther kinde;
With topcastle and bowspreet,[12]
With coardes and ropes, I have all meete
To sayle forth at the next weete [13];
This shipp is at an ende.[14]

MS. cleane (em. W.)
MS. anoynted; em. suggested by Deimling
l (*lit.* in company)
ake ready

5 MS. adds: Tunc faciunt signa quasi laborarent cum diversis instrumentis
6 From W.
7 MS. the name of God
8 inhabit
9 MS. -gether

10 MS. hither
11 MS. gables; W. cabb
12 MS. bewsprytt; cf. Ol
13 wet, rain
14 MS. adds: Tunc Noe cum tota familia, signa laborandi cu versis instru

[*God.*] Of beastes uncleane two and two,
Male and female, without moe[1];
Of cleane fowles seaven alsoe,
The hee and shee togeder[2];
Of fowles uncleane two,[3] and no more,
As I of beastes said before,
That shal be saved throughe my lore,
Against I send the weder.[4]

Of all meates that must be eaten
Into the ship loke there be getten,
For that no way may be forgeten[5];
And doe all this bydeene,[6]
To sustayne man and beast therein
Aye till the water cease and blyn[7];
This world is filled full of synne,
And that is now well sene.

Seaven dayes be yet coming —
You shall have space them in to bringe;
After that is my lyking[8]
Mankinde for to n[o]ye;
40 dayes and 40 nightes
Rayne shall fall for ther unrightes,[9]
And that I have made through my mightes
Now think I to destroye.[10]

Noah. Lord, to thy[11] byddinge I am bayne[12];
Seinge[13] non other grace will gayne,
Hit will I fulfill fayne,
For gratious I thee fynde.

1 more
2 MS. -gether
3 But cf. Gen. 7.3
4 MS. wedder
5 MS. -yeten; W. -getten
6 straightway
7 stop; see Gen. 6.21
8 purpose
9 iniquities
10 Gen. 7.4
11 MS. at your (em. W.)
12 willing
13 MS. sith (em. W.)

A 100 wynters and 20
This shipp making taried have I,
If through amendmént any mercye
Wolde fall unto mankinde.

Have done, you men and women all;
Hye you lest this water fall —
That[1] each beast were in his stall,
And into the ship broughte.
Of cleane beastes seaven shal be,
Of uncleane two — this God bade me;
This floode is nye, well may we see,
Therfore tary you noughte.

Then NOYE *shall goe into the arke with all his family, his wief except, and the arke must be borded rounde about, and one the bordes all the beastes and fowles hereafter receaved must be painted, that thes wordes may agree with the pictures.*[2]

Shem. Syr, here are lyons, libardes in,
Horses, mares, oxen, and swyne,
Geates, calves, sheepe, and kine,
Here sitten thou may see;
Camels, asses, men may finde,
Bucke [and] doe, harte and hynde;
And beastes of all manner kinde
Here bene, as thinkes mee.

Japheth. Take here cattes, dogges[3] to,
Otter, fox, fulmart[4] also;

[1] (hasten) that
[2] From B.; the Latin (from H.) runs: Tunc Noe introibit archam, et familia sua dabit et recitabit omnia animalia depicta in cartis, et, postquam unus quisque suam locutus est partem, ibit in archam, uxore Noe excepta, et animalia depicta cum verbis concordare debent; et sic incipiet primus filius
[3] MS. cattes and doggs; W. cattes, dogges
[4] polecat

Hares, hopping, gaylie can goe —
  Have cowle[1] here for to eate.
Noah's Wife. And here are beares, wolfes, sett,
Apes, owles, marmoset,[2]
Weesells, squirrels, and firret[3];
  Here they eaten their meate.

Shem's Wife. Yet more beastes are in this howse:
Here cattis maken it full crowse[4];
Here a ratten,[5] here a mowse,
  They stand nye togeder.[6]
Ham's Wife. And here are fowles les and more:
Hearnes,[7] cranes, and byttour,[8]
Swans, peacockes; and them before
  Meate for this wedder.

Japheth's Wife. Here are cockes, kites, crowes,
Rookes, ravens — many rowes[9] —
Cuckoes, curlewes — whoever knowes —
  Eache one in his kinde;
And here are doves, diggs,[10] drakes,
Redshankes runninge through the lakes;
And each fowle that ledden[11] makes
  In this shipp men may finde.

[*Noah.*] Wife, in this castle we shall be kepte[12];
My childer and thou I wold[13] in lepte.[14]
Noah's Wife. In faith, I[15] had as lief thou slepte,[16]
  For all thy Frankish[17] fare[18];

1 cabbage
2 monkey
3 ferret
4 lively
5 rat (cf. Fr. *raton*); MS. rotten
6 MS. -gether
7 herons
8 bittern
9 rows
10 ducks
11 language (cf. Chaucer, *Squire's Tale* 435, 478)
12 MS. keped; W. kepte
13 would (I would that my children, etc.)
14 MS. leaped; W. lepte
15 MS. Noe I; em. suggested by Deimling
16 MS. sleppit; W. slepte
17 French
18 behavior (?)

I will not doe after thy red[e].[1]
Noah. Good wife, doe now as I the bede[2]!
Noah's Wife. By Christ, not or[3] I see more neede
Though thou stand all day[4] and stare!

Noah. Lord, that women be crabbed aye,
And never are meke, that dare I saye!
This is wel sene by me to-daye,
In witnes of yow each one.
Good wife, let be all this beere[5]
That thou makes in this place here;
For all they wene thou art master —
So art thou,[6] by St. John!

Then NOYE *with all his familie shall make a sign*
as though the[y] wroughte upon the shippe with
diveres instrumentes. and after that GOD *shal*
speake to NOYE, *sayinge*[7]:

God. Noe, [now] take thou thy meanye,[8]
And in the shippe hye[9] that thow[10] be,
For none so righteous man to me
Is now on earth lyvinge.
Of cleane beastes with thee thou take
Seaven and seaven or thou slake[11];
Hee and shee, make[12] to make,
Belyve[13] in that[14] thou bringe.[15]

Noah. Wife, come in! Why standes thou here
Thou art ever froward — that dare I sweare!
Come in, on God's half[16]! Tyme yt were,
For feare lest that we drowne.

[1] counsel
[2] MS. bydd; cf. OE. *bēodan*
[3] before, till
[4] MS. the day; W. day
[5] clamor
[6] MS. and so thou art
[7] From W.; cf. note 2 on p. 488
[8] company
[9] hasten
[10] MS. yow
[11] stop
[12]
[13]
[14]
[15]
[16]

Noah's Wife. Yea, sir, set up your sayle,
And rowe forth with evill hayle,[1]
For, without[en][2] any fayle,
I will not out of this towne.

But[3] I have my gossips everichon,
One foote further I will not gone;
They shall not drowne, by St. John,
And[4] I may save their lyfe!
They loved me full well, by Christ!
But[3] thou wilt let them in thy chist,[5]
Rowe[6] forth, Noe, whether[7] thou list,
And get thee a new wife.

Noah. Sem, sonne, loe thy mother is wrow[8];
Forsooth such another I do not know.
Shem. Father, I shall fett her in, I trow,
Without[en] any fayle.—
Mother, my father after thee send,
And bydds the into yonder ship wend;
Loke up, and se the wynde,
For we be readye to sayle.

Noah's Wife. Sonne, goe again to him, and say
I will not come therein to-daye.
Noah. Come in, wife, in 20 devills waye!
Or els stand there without.
Ham. [Father], shall wee all fet her in?
Noah. Yea, sonnes, in Christ's blessinge and myne!
I would yow hyde[9] yow betyme,
For of this flood I doubte.[10]

1 success; H. heale
2 em. from W.
3 unless
4 if
5 ark
6 MS. els rowe
7 whither
8 angry; MS. wraw (em. from W.)
9 hied
10 MS. am in doubte

[*Noah's Wife.*] The flood comes in full fleetinge fast,[1]
On every side it spredeth full ferre[2];
For feare of drowning I am agast;
Good gossip, let us draw neare,
And let us drinke or we depart,
For oftentymes we have done soe;
At[3] a draught thou drinkes a quarte,
And so will I doe or I goe.[4]

Japheth. Mother, we praye you altogeder[5] —
For we are here your owne childer —
Come into the ship, for feare of the wedder,
For his love that you boughte[6]!
Noah's Wife. That will I not, for all your call,
But[7] I have my gossopes all.
Shem. In feith, mother, yet you shall,
Whether you will or not.[8] [*She enters.*

Noah. Welcome, wife, into this boate!
Noah's Wife. And have thou that for thy note[9]!
[*Gives him a box on the ear.*[10]
Noah. A, ha! Mary,[11] this is hote!
It is good to be still!
A, children, me thinkes my boate remeves,[12]
Our tarying here hugelie me greves;
Over the lande the water spredes;
God doe as he will!

Ah, great God that art so good,
That[13] worchis not thie will is wood!
Now all this world is on a flood,
As I see well in sighte.

1 This stanza is noted by Hohlfeld as a later addition (*Anglia* 11. 270)
2 MS. fare (em. K.)
3 MS. for at (em. K.)
4 B., W. add:
Here is a pottell of Malmesy good and stronge;
It will rejoy[c]e both hart and tong;
Though Noy thinke us never so long,
Yet wee will drinke alyke.
5 MS. -gether
6 redeemed
7 unless
8 H. adds: *Tunc ibit*
9 pains (*lit.* benefit); MS. mote; em. from W.
10 For the Latin (H.): *Et dat alapam vita*
11 marry
12 moves
13 that which, he who

This window I will shut anon,
And into my chamber will I gone,
Till this water, so greate one,
Be slaked [1] throughe thy mighte.

Then shall NOYE *shutte the wyndowe of they arke, and for a littill space be silent, and afterwarde lokinge rounde aboute shall saye* [2]*:*

Now 40 dayes are fullie gone,
Send a raven I will anone,
If oughtwhere [3] earth, tree, or stone,
Be drye in any place;
And if this foule come not againe,
It is a signe, soth to sayne,
That drye it is on hill or playne,[4]
And God hath done some grace.

Then he shall send forth the raven, and, taking a dove in his hand, shall say [5]*:*

Ah, Lord! wherever this raven be,
Somewhere is drye, well I see,
But yet a dove — by my lewtye [6]! —
After I will sende.
Thou wilt turne againe to me,
For of all fowles that may flye,[7]
Thou art most meke and hend.[8]

Then he shall send forth the dove, and there shall be in the ark another dove, which shall be let

[1] abated
[2] From W.; the Latin (H.) runs: Tunc Noe claudet fenestram archæ, et per modicum spatium infra tectum cantent psalmum 'Save mee, O God' [probably Ps. 69], et aperiens fenestram et respiciens
[3] anywhere; perhaps for oughwhere, variant of owhere
[4] Gen. 8. 6, 7
[5] Translated from H.: Tunc dimittet corvum, et, capiens columbam in manibus, dicat
[6] loyalty, faith
[7] Here a line seems to have dropped out
[8] gentle; cf. Gen. 8. 8

down from the mast [illegible] into the han
of NOAH; *and afterward* NOAH *shall say*

Ah, Lord! blessed be thou aye,
That hast me comfort[2] thus to-day
By this sight; I may well saye,
This flood beginnes to cease;
My sweete dove to me brought hase
A branch of olyve from some place;
This betokeneth God has done us grace,[3]
And is a signe of peace.[4]

Ah, Lord, honoured most thou be!
All earthe dryes, now I see,
But yet tyll thou comaunde me
Hence will I not hye.
All this water is awaye;
Therfore, as sone as I maye,
Sacryfice I shall doe, in faye,[5]
To thee devoutlye.[6]

God. Noe, take thy wife anone,
And thy children every one;
Out of the shippe thou shalt gone,
And they all with thee;
Beastes, and all that can flie,
Out anone they shall hye,
On earth to grow and multeplye;
I will that yt soe be.[7]

Noah. Lord, I thanke the through thy migh[t],
Thy bidding shall be done in height,[8]

[1] Translated from H.: Tunc emittet columbam, et erit in nave alia columba, ferens olivam in ore, quæ demittetur [MS. quam demittet] ex malo per funem in manus Noe; et postea dicat Noe
[2] comforted
[3] MS. some grace
[4] Gen. 8. 11
[5] faith
[6] Gen. 8. 20
[7] MS. be soe (em. [illegible] cf. Gen. 8. 16, 17
[8] with speed

And, as fast as I may dighte,[1]
I will doe the honoure,
And to thee offer sacrifice;
Therfore comes,[2] in all wise,
For of these beastes that bene hise
Offer I will this stower.[3]

Then, going out from the ark with his whole family, he shall take with him his animals and birds, and shall offer them and slay.[4]

Lord God in majestye,
Thou[5] such grace hast graunted me,
Where all was lorne, save[6] to be;
Therfore now I am bowne,
My wife, my childer, my meanye,[7]
With sacrifice to honoure thee;
With beastes, fowles, as thou may see,
I offer here right sone.[8]

God. Noe, to me thou arte full able,[9]
And thy sacrifice acceptable;
For I have fownd thee trew and stable,
On the now must I myn[10]:
Warry[11] earth will I no more
For mans synne that greves me sore,
For, of[12] youth, man full yore
Has byn enclyned to synnye.[13]

You shall now grow and multeply,
And earth, againe, you edefie[14];
Each beast, and fowle that may flie,
Shall be afrayd of you;

[1] make ready
[2] imp. plur.
[3] store
[4] Translated from H.: Tunc egrediens archam cum tota familia sua, accipiet animalia sua et volucres et offeret ea et sacrificabit
[5] MS. that
[6] safe
[7] nom.
[8] Cf. Gen. 8. 2[illegible]
[illegible]

And fishe in sea, that may flete,[1]
Shall susteyne yow, I yow behete[2];
To eate of them yow ne lete[3]
That cleane bene you may knowe.[4]

Thereas[5] you have eaten before
Grasse and rootes sith you were bore,
Of cleane beastes now, les and more,
I geve you leave to eate;
Safe[6] bloode and flesh, bothe in feare,[7]
Of[8] wrong-dead carren[9] that is here;
Eates not of that in no manere,
For that aye you shall let[e].[10]

Manslaughter also you shall flee,
For that is not pleasant to me;
That[11] shedes bloode, he or shee,
Oughtwhere amongst mankinne,[12]
That blood foule sheede shal be,
And venge[a]nce have, that men shall se;
Therfore beware now all[e] yee,
You fall not in that synne.[13]

A forwarde[14] now with thee[15] I make,
And all thy seede for thy sake,
Of suche vengeance for to slake,
For now I have my will.
Here I behet the a heaste[16] —
That man [ne] woman, fowle ne beaste,
With water, while the world shall l[e]ast[e],[17]
I will [them] no more spill.[18]

1 float, swim; MS. flytte
2 promise; MS. -hite
3 refrain, forbear; MS. lett
4 that you may know to be clean; Gen. 9. 1–3; cf. 7. 2; 8. 20
5 whereas
6 save
7 together; Gen. 9. 4
8 Miswritten for 'or'?
9 carrion; see Lev. 22. 8
10 leave
11 whoever
12 MS. -kinde; em. suggested by Pollard
13 Gen. 9. 5, 6
14 covenant
15 MS. thie
16 promise
17 em. K.
18 destroy; Gen. 9. 9–

My bowe betwene you and me
In the firmament shall bee,
By verey token, that you may see
That such vengeance shall cease;
That man ne woman shall never more
Be wasted by water, as was[1] before[2];
But for syn, that greveth me sore,
Therfore this vengeance wes.[3]

Where cloudes in the welkin bene,
That ilke bowe shall be sene,
In tokeninge that my wrath and tene
Shall never thus[4] wroken be;
The stringe is turned toward you,
And toward me is bent the bowe,
That such wedder shall never showe;
And this behett I thee.[5]

My blessing now I geve the here,
To thee, Noe, my servant dere,
For vengeance shall no more appeare;
And now farewell, my darling deere.[6]

THE BROME PLAY OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Lucy Toulmin Smith, the first editor (in 1884) thus characterizes the play, in comparison with the five others on the same subject (*Anglia* 7. 332): 'On the whole, the Brome version now printed is superior to those above described in the touches of child-nature, and in the play of feeling skilfully shown — the dear coquetting between the love of his child and the committal of the deed by the obedient but agonized father. The child begging his father not to kill him, and his fear of the sword even after all danger is over, . . . are touched in with a life not found elsewhere. The thought of the mother . . . breaks out in the most natural and affecting manner, . . . and the joyful rebound of emotion after the painful strain between duty and affection, expressing itself in the kisses of Abraham and the apostrophes of Isaac to the "gentle sheep,"

[1] MS. is
[2] Gen. 9. 12–15
[3] MS. was (em. K.)
[4] MS. this
[5] Gen. 9. 16
[6] W. adds:
Finis. Deo gracias! per me, George Bellin, 1592.
Come, Lorde Jesu, come quicklye.

And fishe in sea, that may flete,[1]
Shall susteyne yow, I yow behete[2];
To eate of them yow ne lete[3]
That cleane bene you may knowe.[4]

Thereas[5] you have eaten before
Grasse and rootes sith you were bore,
Of cleane beastes now, les and more,
I geve you leave to eate;
Safe[6] bloode and flesh, bothe in feare,[7]
Of[8] wrong-dead carren[9] that is here;
Eates not of that in no manere,
For that aye you shall let[e].[10]

Manslaughter also you shall flee,
For that is not pleasant to me;
That[11] shedes bloode, he or shee,
Oughtwhere amongst mankinne,[12]
That blood foule sheede shal be,
And venge[a]nce have, that men shall se;
Therfore beware now all[e] yee,
You fall not in that synne.[13]

A forwarde[14] now with thee[15] I make,
And all thy seede for thy sake,
Of suche vengeance for to slake,
For now I have my will.
Here I behet the a heaste[16] —
That man [ne] woman, fowle ne beaste,
With water, while the world shall l[e]ast[e],[17]
I will [them] no more spill.[18]

1 float, swim; MS. flytte
2 promise; MS. -hite
3 refrain, forbear; MS. lett
4 that you may know to be clean; Gen. 9. 1–3; cf. 7. 2; 8. 20
5 whereas
6 save
7 together; Gen. 9. 4
8 Miswritten for 'or'?
9 carrion; see Lev. 22. 8
10 leave
11 whoever
12 MS. -kinde; em. suggested by Pollard
13 Gen. 9. 5, 6
14 covenant
15 MS. thie
16 promise
17 em. K.
18 destroy; Gen. 9. 9–1

My bowe betwene you and me
In the firmament shall bee,
By verey token, that you may see
        That such vengeance shall cease;
That man ne woman shall never more
Be wasted by water, as was[1] before[2];
But for syn, that greveth me sore,
        Therfore this vengeance wes.[3]

Where cloudes in the welkin bene,
That ilke bowe shall be sene,
In tokeninge that my wrath and tene
        Shall never thus[4] wroken be;
The stringe is turned toward you,
And toward me is bent the bowe,
That such wedder shall never showe;
        And this behett I thee.[5]

My blessing now I geve the here,
To thee, Noe, my servant dere,
For vengeance shall no more appeare;
And now farewell, my darling deere.[6]

THE BROME PLAY OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Lucy Toulmin Smith, the first editor (in 1884) thus characterizes the play, in comparison with the five others on the same subject (*Anglia* 7. 332): 'On the whole, the Brome version now printed is superior to those above described in the touches of child-nature, and in the play of feeling skilfully shown — the dear coquetting between the love of his child and the committal of the deed by the obedient but agonized father. The child begging his father not to kill him, and his fear of the sword even after all danger is over, . . . are touched in with a life not found elsewhere. The thought of the mother . . . breaks out in the most natural and affecting manner, . . . and the joyful rebound of emotion after the painful strain between duty and affection, expressing itself in the kisses of Abraham and the apostrophes of Isaac to the "gentle sheep,"

[1] MS. is
[2] Gen. 9. 12–15
[3] MS. was (em. K.)
[4] MS. this
[5] Gen. 9. 16
[6] W. adds:
Finis. Deo gracias! per me, George Bellin, 1592.
Come, Lorde Jesu, come quicklye.

must have warmly appealed to the hearts of the audience. Finally, the lesson of faith for "learned and lewed" and "the wisest of us all" is taught by the "Doctor" in the simplest manner.'

Gayley thinks this the third miracle-play in order of time, the first being *The Harrowing of Hell* (ca. 1250), and the second, *Jacob and Esau* (ca. 1280) He says (*Plays of our Forefathers*, p. 126): 'The Brome play of *Abraham and Isaac*, which comes next in order of production, is undoubtedly the basis of *The Sacrifice of Isaac* in the Chester cycle, and probably in an earlier version dates from the beginning of the fourteenth century.' A particularly close parallel is that between 506 3-6 and the Chester play 289–92 (ed. Deimling, p. 76)

> If I have trespassed in any degree,
> With a yard you maye beate me;
> Put up your sword, if your will be,
> For I am but a childe.

The play has been three times printed — by Miss Smith as above (A.), by Lady Kerrison and Miss Smith in 1886 (B.), and by Manly in 1897 (M.) Pollard has reproduced lines 316–435 (*English Miracle Plays*, Appendix IV) following Miss Smith.

The unique manuscript (1470–1480) takes its name from the village of Brome in Suffolk, two miles north of Eye. Brome was from the fourteenth century the seat of the Cornwallis family, to which belonged the Lord Cornwallis who was conspicuous in the American Revolution.

The two editions directly from the manuscript differ here and there in their readings; of the readings I have rejected I have taken no account. Important emendations have been made by Miss Smith, Holthausen (*Anglia* 13 (1891) 361–2), and Manly (*Spec. Pre-Shak. Drama* 1. 41–57). I have been tempted to further efforts at restoration by the remark of Miss Smith (*Anglia* 7. 322–3) 'Judging by the analogy of other plays of the kind, it is probable that this also was originally composed with much care for its poetical form, but has become partially corrupt through oral repetition and the errors of copyists.' All the emendations not attributed to S., H., or M. are by myself; some are perhaps rather daring, but it is easy to revert to the manuscript-readings. Stage directions (following a bracket) have been supplied partly from S. and M.: two or three are found in the manuscript, in Latin.

Miss Smith remarks (*Anglia* 7. 322): 'With regard to the versification, the reader will observe that it is irregular: in several places the lines run in clear stanzas of five lines, riming abaab; in others it appears to be in stanzas of eight lines, riming alternately, with a frequent short line or tag following. There are also many lines which seem to be formless as regards metre, rime, or stanza. Accordingly the indications of stanzaic form are often somewhat obscured in this play.

I have modernized in the stage-directions the names of certain characters for the sake of consistency — *Deus* to *God*, *The Angell* to *Angel*, *Ysaac* to *Isaac*.

SCENE I

A field near ABRAHAM'S *home in Beersheba*

Enter ABRAHAM *and* ISAAC

Abraham. Fader of hevyn omnipotent,
With all my hart to the I call;
Thow hast ȝoffe[1] me both lond and rent,[2]
And my lyvelod thow hast me sent;
I thanke the evermore[3] of all.

Fyrst off[4] the erth þou madyst Adam,
And Eve also to be hys wyffe;
All other creatures of them too[5] cam;
And now thow hast grant[6] to me, Abram,[7]
Her in thys lond to lede my lyffe.

In my age þou hast grantyd me thys,
That thys ȝowng chyld with me shall wone[8];
I love nothyng so myche, iwysse,
Except þi[9] selffe, der Fader of blysse,
As Ysaac her, my owyne swete sone.

I have dyverse chyldryn moo,
The wych I love not halffe so wyll[10];
Thys fayer swet chyld he chereys[11] me soo
In every place wer that I goo,
That noo dessece[12] her may I fell.[13]

And therfor, Fadyr of hevyn, I prey[14]
For hys helth, and also for hys grace;

[1] given
[2] income
[3] MS. heyly euermore
[4] of
[5] two
[6] granted
[7] MS. Abraham
[8] dwell
[9] MS. thin owyne; see next line
[10] well; pronounced wail
[11] MS. scherys
[12] discomfort
[13] feel
[14] MS. the prey

Now, Lord, kepe hym both nyght[1] and day,
That never dessese nor noo [af]fray[2]
Cume to my chyld in noo place.

Now cum on, Ysaac, my owyne swet chyld;
Goo we hom, and take owr rest.

Isaac. Abraham, myne owyne fader so myld,
To folowe ȝow I am full prest,[3]
Bothe erly and late.

Abraham. Cume on, swete chyld, I love the best
Of all the chyldryn that I[4] begat. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

Heaven. Enter GOD *and an* ANGEL

God. Myn angell, fast hey[5] the thy wey,
And to[6] medyll erth anon þou goo;
Abra[ha]ms hart now wyll I asay,
Wether that he be stedfast or noo.

Sey I commaw[n]dyd hym for to take
Ysaac, hys sonne,[7] þat he love[s] so wyll,
And with hys blood sacryfyce he make,
Ony[8] off my freynchepe [yf] he wyll fell.[9]

Schow hym the wey onto[10] the hylle
Wer that hys sacryffyce schall be.
I schall asay now hys good wyll,
Whether he lovyth[11] better hys chyld or me.

All men schall take exampyll be hym
My commawmentes how they schall kepe. [*Exeunt.*

[1] MS. nygth
[2] fright, terror
[3] ready; MS. glad (em. H.)
[4] MS. ever I
[5] haste
[6] unto; MS. on to
[7] MS. ȝowng sonne; cf. 501 24
[8] MS. yffe ony
[9] MS. ffell
[10] unto
[11] MS. lovyd (em. M.)

SCENE III

A field near ABRAHAM'S *home. Enter* ABRAHAM

Abraham. Now, Fader of hevyn, þat formyd all thyng,
My preyeres I make to the aȝeyn,
For thys day my tender offryng
Here must I ȝeve to the, certeyn.

A! Lord God, allmyty Kyng,
Wat maner best[1] woll make þe most fayn?
Yff I had therof very knoyng,[2]
Yt schuld be don with all my mayne[3]

Full sone by me.[4]
To don thy plesyng on an hyll,
Verely yt ys my wyll,
Dere Fader, God in Trinyte.

Enter ANGEL

Angel. Abraham, Abraham, wyll þou rest!
Owr Lord comandyth þe for to take
Ysaac, thy ȝowng sone, that thow lovyst best,
And with hys blod sacryfyce þat thow make.

Into the lond of v[i]syon[5] thow goo,
And offer thy chyld onto thy Lord;
I schall the lede and schow allsoo.
Unto Goddes hest, Abraham, acord,

And folow me upon thys grene.

Abraham. Wollecom[6] to me be my Lordes sond,[7]
And hys hest I wyll not withstond;
Ȝyt Ysaac, my ȝowng sonne in lond,
A full dere chyld to me hase[8] bene.[9]

1 beast
2 knowing, knowledge
3 might, strength (cf. 'might and main')
4 MS. anone (em. H.)
5 Moriah (Gen. 22. 2); em. H.
6 welcome
7 messenger
8 MS. haue
9 MS. byn

I had lever, yf God had be plesyd,
For to a[1] forbore[2] all þe good þat I have,
Than Ysaac my sone schuld a be desessyd,[3]
So God in hevyn my sowll mot save!

I lovyd never thyng soo mych in erde,[4]
And now I must the chyld goo kyll.
A, Lord[5]! my conseons ys stron[g]ly sterd,[6]
And ȝyt, my dere Lord, I am sore[7] aferd
To groche[8] ony thyng[9] aȝens thy wyll.

I love my chyld as [I love] my lyffe,
But ȝyt I love my God myche more,
For thow my hart woold make ony stryffe,
Ȝyt wyll I not spare for chyld nor wyffe,
But don after my Lordes lore.[10]

Thow I love my sonne never so wyll,
Ȝyt smythe of[11] hys hed sone I schall.
A, Fader of hevyn! to the I knell;
An hard dethe my son schall fell,
For to honor the, [my] Lord, withall.

Angel. Abraham! Abraham! thys ys wyll seyd,
And all thys comamentes loke þou obay[12];
But in thy hart be nothyng dysmayd.[13]

Abraham. Nay, nay, I[14] hold me wyll apayd[15]
To plesse[16] my God to the best I[17] may,[18]

1 have
2 done without
3 disturbed, put to discomfort, molested
4 MS. erthe (em. M., following S.'s suggestion)
5 MS. Lord God
6 stirred; MS. steryd
7 MS. sere (em. H.)
8 MS. ȝowr
9 make any complaint
10 instruction
11 smite off
12 MS. loke þat þou kepe (em. suggested by M.)
13 MS. dismasyd; em. M.
14 MS. forsoth I
15 MS. plesyd (M. suggests em.)
16 MS. pelsse
17 MS. þat I
18 MS. haue (M. suggests em.)

For thow my hart be hevely sett
  To see the blood of my owyn dere sone, [*Exit* ANGEL
Ȝyt for all thys I wyll not lett.[1]
But Ysaac, my son, I wyll goo fett,
  And cum asse fast as ever we conne.[2] [*Exit.*

SCENE IV

ABRAHAM'S *home.* *Enter* ABRAHAM *and* ISAAC

[*Abraham.*] Now, Ysaac, my owyne son [so] dere,
  Wer art thow, chyld? Speke to me.

Isaac. My fayer swet fader, I am here,
  And make my preyrys to þe Trenyte.

Abraham. Rysse up, my chyld, and fast cum heder,
  My gentyll barn[3] þat art so wysse,
For we to,[4] chyld, must goo togeder,
  And onto my Lord make sacryfyce.

Isaac. I am full redy, my fader, loo!
  Evyn[5] at ȝowr handes I stand ryght[6] here,
And watsoever ȝe byd me doo,
  Yt schall be don with glad cher,
    Full wyll and fyne.

Abraham. A! Ysaac, my owyn son soo dere,
  Godes blyssyng I gyffe the, and myn.

Hold thys fagot upon þi bake,
  And her myselffe fyer schall bryng.

Isaac. Fader, all thys her wyll I packe;
  I am full fayn to do ȝowr bedyng.

[1] desist
[2] MS. can
[3] child
[4] two

Abraham. A, Lord of hevyn! my handes I wryng,
Thys chyldes wordes all towond[1] my harte.

Now, Ysaac son, goo we owr wey
Onto ȝon mownte, with all owr mayn.

Isaac. Go we, my dere fader, as fast as I may;
To folow ȝow I am full fayn,
Allthow I be slendyr.

Abraham. A, Lord! my hart brekyth on tweyn,[2]
Thys chyldes wordes, they be so tender.

SCENE V

Mount Moriah. Enter ABRAHAM *and* ISAAC

A, Ysaac, son! anon ley yt down,
No lenger upon þi backe yt hold,[3]
For I must make redy bo[u]n[4]
To honowr my Lord God as I schold.[5]

Isaac. Loo, my dere fader, wer yt ys!
To cher[6] ȝow allwey I draw me ner;
But, fader, I mervell sore of thys,
Wy þat ȝe make thys hevy chere;

And also evermore[7] dred I:
Wer ys ȝowr best[8] þat ȝe schuld kyll?
Both fyer and wood we have redy,
But queke[9] best have we non on þis hyll;

A qwyke best, I wot wyll, must be ded,
Ȝowr sacryfyce for to make.[10]

[1] wound
[2] MS. tewyn (em. S.)
[3] MS. bere (em. M., following Kittredge's suggestion)
[4] prepared
[5] MS. schuld
[6] cheer
[7] MS. fader euermore
[8] MS. queke best
[9] living
[10] MS. transposes this line and the next (em. S.)

Abraham. Dred the nowyht,[1] my chyld, I the red[2];
Owr Lord wyll send me onto thys sted[3]
Summ maner a best for to take,
Throw hys swet sond.

Isaac. Ȝa, fader, but my hart begynnyth to quake
To se þat scharpe sword in ȝowr hond.

Wy bere ȝe ȝowr sword drawyn soo?
Off ȝowre contenauns[4] I have mych wonder.

Abraham. A, Fader of hevyn, so[5] I am woo!
Thys chyld her brekys my harte onsonder.[6]

Isaac. Tell me, my dere fader, or that ȝe ses,[7]
Ber ȝe ȝowr sword draw[yn][8] for me?

Abraham. A, Ysaac, swet son, pes! [a,] pes!
For iwys thow breke[s] my harte on thre.

Isaac. Now trewly, sumwat, fader, ȝe thynke,[9]
That ȝe morne[10] thus [ay] more and more.

Abraham. A! Lord of hevyn, thy grace let synke,
For my hart was never halffe so sore.

Isaac. I preye ȝow, fader, let[11] me þat wyt,[12]
Wyther schall I have ony harme or noo.

Abraham. Iwys, swet son, I may not tell the ȝyt,
My hart ys now soo full of woo.

Isaac. Dere fader, I prey,[13] hyd yt[14] not fro me,
But sum of ȝowr thowt ȝe[15] tell me [anone].

1 not at all; MS. -wyth
2 counsel
3 place
4 countenance; MS. conwnauns
5 MS. os (em. S.)
6 MS. on too (em. H.)
7 cease
8 em. M.
9 ponder upon
10 mourn
11 MS. þat ȝe wyll let
12 know
13 MS. prey ȝow
14 MS. hydygth (em. M.)
15 MS. þat ȝe

Abraham. A, Ysaac, Ysaac, I must kyll the!

Isaac. Kyll me, fader? alasse, wat have I done?

Yff I have trespassyd azens zow owt,
Ȝe may make me with a zard[1] full myld,
And with zowr scharp sword kyll me nowt,[2]
For iwys, fader, I am but a chyld.

Abraham. I am full sory[3] thy blood for to spyll,
But truly, my chyld, I may not chese.[4]

Isaac. Now I wold[5] my moder were on[6] þis[7] hyll!
Sche woold knele for me on both hyr kneys

To save my lyffe.
And sythyn[8] my moder ys not here,
I prey zow, fader, chonge[9] zowr chere,
And kyll me not with zowyr knyffe.

Abraham. Forsothe, son, but-zyf I the kyll,
I schuld greve God ryght[10] sore, I drede;
Yt ys hys commawment and also hys wyll
That I schuld do thys same dede.

He commawdyd me, son, for serteyn,
To make my sacryfyce with thy blood.

Isaac. And ys yt Goddes wyll þat I schuld be slayn?

Abraham. Ȝa, truly, Ysaac, my son soo good,
And therfor my handes I wryng.

[1] rod; MS. with a zard ze may make me
[2] MS. nogth
[3] MS. sory son
[4] choose
[5] MS. wold to God
[6] MS. her on
[7] A. ys, B. yis (em. M.)
[8] MS. syþyn þat
[9] change; MS. schonge
[10] MS. rygth

Isaac. Now, fader, aȝens my Lordes decre[1]
I wyll never groche, lowd nor styll;
He myght[2] a[3] sent me a better destyne[4]
Yf yt had a be hys wyll.[5]

Abraham. Forsothe, son, but-yf I do[6] þis dede,
Grevosly dysplessyd owr Lord wyll be.

Isaac. Nay, nay, fader, God forbede
That ever ȝe schuld greve hym for me.

Ȝe have other chyldryn, on or too,
The wyche ȝe schuld love wyll be kynd.[7]
I prey ȝow, fader, make ȝe no woo,
For, be I onys ded and fro ȝow goo,
I schall be sone owt of ȝowr mynd.

Therfor doo owr Lordes byddyng,
And wan I am ded, than prey for me;
But, good fader, tell ȝe my moder nothyng,
Say þat I am dwellyng[8] in another cuntre.[9]

Abraham. A, Ysaac,[10] blessyd mot thow be!

My hart begynnyth[11] stron[g]ly to rysse,
To see the blood off thy blyssyd body.

Isaac. Fadyr, syn yt may be noo other wysse,[12]
Let yt passe over as wyll as I;

But, or[13] I goo onto my deth,
I prey ȝow blysse me with ȝowr hond.[14]

1 MS. wyll (em. suggested by M.)
2 MS. mygth
3 have
4 MS. desteny
5 MS. plecer (em. suggested by M.)
6 MS. ded
7 by nature, naturally
8 MS. dewllyng (em. S.)
9 MS. in another cuntre dewylling
10 MS. Ysaac, Ysaac
11 MS. begynnyd (em. M.)
12 wise
13 before; MS. fader or
14 MS. hand

Abraham. Now, Ysaac, [sone,] with all my breth
My blyssyng I ȝeve þe upon thys lond,
And Godes also therto, iwys.
Ysaac, Ysaac, sone, up thow stond,
Thy fayer swete mowthe þat I may kys.

Isaac. Now farwyll,[1] my owyne fader so fyn,
And grete wyll my moder in erde.[2]
But I prey ȝow, fader, to hyd my eyne,
That I se not þe stroke of ȝowr scharpe swerd,[3]
That my fleysse schall defyle.

Abraham. Sone, thy wordes make me to wepe full sore;
Now, my dere son Ysaac, speke no more.

Isaac. A, my owyne dere fader, werefore?
We schall speke togedyr her but a wylle,[4]
And sythyn that I must nedys[5] be ded,
Ȝyt, my dere fader, to ȝow I prey,
Smythe but fewe[6] strokes at my hed,
And make an end as sone as ȝe may,
And tery not to longe.

Abraham. Thy meke wordes, chyld, make me afray[7];
So 'Welawey!' may be my songe,
Excepe al only Godes wyll.
A, Ysaac, my owyn swete chyld,
Ȝyt kysse me aȝen upon thys hyll!
In all thys war[l]d[8] ys non soo myld.

Isaac. Now truly, fader, all thys teryyng
Yt doth my hart but harme;
I prey ȝow, fader, make an enddyng.

[1] farewell; MS. for-
[2] MS. erthe (em. M., following S.'s suggestion)
[3] MS. sword (em. M.)
[4] while, short time
[5] needs; MS. nedysse
[6] MS. feve (em. M.)
[7] afraid; MS. afrayed (em. M.)
[8] em. S.

Abraham. Cume up, swet son, onto my arme;

I must bynd thy handes too,
Allthow thow be never soo myld.

Isaac. A, mercy, fader! wy schuld ȝe do soo?

Abraham. That thow schuldyst not let,[1] my chyld.

Isaac. Nay, iwysse, fader, I wyll not let ȝow;
Do on for me ȝowr wyll,
And on the purpos that ȝe have set ȝow
For Godes love kepe yt forthe styll.

I am full sory thys day to dey,[2]
But ȝyt I kepe[3] not my God to greve;
Do on ȝowr lyst[4] for me hard[e]ly,
My fayer swete fader, I ȝeffe ȝow leve.

But, fader, I prey ȝow evermore,
Tell ȝe my moder never a[5] dell[6];
Yffe sche wist[7] yt, sche wold wepe full sore,
For iwysse, fader, sche lovyt[h] me wylle[8];

Goddes blyssyng have mot sche[9]!
Now forwyll, my moder so swete,
We too be leke[10] no mor to mete.

Abraham. A, Ysaac, son[11]! þou makyst me gret,[12]
And with thy wordes[13] dystempurst[14] me.

Isaac. Swete[15] fader, I am sory ȝow to greve[16];
I cry ȝow mercy of that I have donne,
And of all trespasse þat ever I ded meve[17];
Now, fader,[18] forgyffe me þat I have donne.
God of hevyn be with me!

[1] hinder
[2] die
[3] wish, desire
[4] pleasure
[5] MS. no
[6] part of it
[7] knew; MS. wost
[8] MS. full wylle
[9] MS. mot sche have (em. H.)
[10] are likely
[11] MS. Ysaac, Ysaac
[12] lament, weep; MS. to gret
[13] MS. wordes thow
[14] troublest
[15] MS. iwysse swete
[16] MS. to greve ȝow
[17] cause; MS. meve ȝow
[18] MS. dere fader

Abraham. To don thys dede I am full sory,
But, Lord, thyn hest I wyll not withstond.

Isaac. A, Fader of hevyn, to the I crye,
Lord, reseyve me into thy hond.[1]

Abraham. Loo, now ys cum the tyme[2] certeyn
That my swerd[3] in hys necke schall bite.[4]
A, Lord, my hart reysyth therageyn,[5]
I may not fynd[6] in my harte to smygth —

My hart wyll not now thertoo.
Ȝyt fayn I woold warke my Lordes wyll;
But thys ȝowng innosent lygth so styll,
I may not fynd[6] in my hart hym to kyll.
O, Fader of hevyn, what schall I doo?

Isaac. A, mercy, fader, wy[7] tery ȝe so,
And let me ley thus longe on þis hethe?
Now I wold to God þe stroke were doo[8]!
I prey ȝow,[9] schorte me of[10] my woo,
And let me not loke thus after[11] my deth.[12]

Abraham. Now, hart, wy wilt thow not[13] breke on thre?
Ȝyt schall þ[o]u not make me to God[14] onmyld.[15]
I wyll no lenger let[16] for the,
For that my God agrevyd wold be;
Now hoold[17] the[18] stroke, my owyn dere chyld.

Her ABRAHAM *drew hys stroke, and þe* ANGELL *toke the swerd*[3] *in hys hond soddenly.*

Angel. I am an angell, thow mayist se[19] blythe,
That fro hevyn to the ys sent.[20]

1 MS. hand
2 MS. the tyme cum
3 MS. sword
4 MS. synke (em. H.)
5 against this
6 MS. fyndygth; M. fynd yt
7 why
8 done
9 MS. fader I prey ȝow hartely
10 shorten
11 wait thus for
12 MS. degth
13 MS. wolddyst not thou
14 MS. my God
15 ungracious (*lit.* unmild)
16 tarry
17 receive
18 MS. tha
19 see
20 MS. senth

Owr Lord thanke[th] the an c sythe[1]
For the kepyng of hys commaw[nde]ment.

He knowyt[h] þi wyll and also thy harte,
That thow dredyst hym above all thyng;
And sum of thy hevynes for to departe,[2]
A fayr ram ȝynder[3] I gan brynge;

He standyth teyed, loo, among þe breres.
Now, Abraham, amend thy mood,
For Ysaac, thy ȝowng son þat her ys,
Thys day [thow] schall not sched hys blood;

Goo, make thy sacryfece with ȝon rame.
Now farwyll,[4] blyssyd Abraham,
For onto hevyn I goo now hom;

The way ys full gayn[5] [to pace[6]];
Take up thy son soo free. [*Exit.*

Abraham. A, Lord, I thanke the of thy gret grace!
Now am I teyed[7] on dyvers wysse;
Arysse up, Ysaac, my sunne,[8] arysse;
Arysse,[9] swete chyld, and cum to me.

Isaac. A, mercy, fader! wy smygth ȝe nowt[10]?
A, smygth on, fader, onys with ȝowr knyffe.

Abraham. Pesse, my swet son,[11] and take no thowt,
For owr Lord of hevyn hath grant þi lyffe

Be hys angell now, that þou schalt not dey.[12]

Isaac. A, fader, full glad than wer I,

1 a hundred times
2 banish
3 yonder
4 MS. for-
5 near, straight
6 pass; em. H.
7 bound (to God); MS. yeyed
8 MS. dere sunne
9 MS. arysse up
10 MS. not yyt (em. H.)
11 MS. sir (em. M.)
12 MS. dey þis day sunne truly

Iwys, fader, I sey, iwys,
Yf thys tale wer trew!

Abraham. An hundryd tymys, my son fayer of hew,
For joy þi mowth now wyll I kys.

Isaac. A, my dere fader, Abraham,
Wyll not God be wroth þat we do thus?

Abraham. Noo, noo! swet[1] son, for ȝyn[2] same rame
He hath sent hether down to us.[3]

Ȝyn best schall dey here in þi sted,
In the worþschup[4] of owr Lord alon;
Goo, fet[5] hym hethyr, my chyld, inded.

Isaac. I[6] wyll goo hent[7] hym be the hed,
And bryng ȝon best with me anon.

[*Isaac catches the ram.*

A, scheppe, scheppe, blyssyd mot þou be
That ever thow were sent down heder!
Thow schall thys day dey for me,
In the worchup of the holy Trynyte.
Now cum fast, and goo we togeder

To my fader in hy[8];
Thow þou be never so jentyll and good,
Ȝyt had I lever thow schedyst þi blood,
Iwysse, scheppe, than I.

Loo! fader, I have browt here full smerte[9]
Thys jentyll scheppe, and to[10] ȝow I ȝyffe;

1 MS. swyt
2 yon
3 MS.
Noo, noo! harly, my swyt son,
For ȝyn same rame he hath us sent
Hether down to us;
em. suggested by M.
4 MS. worpschup (em. S.)
5 fetch
6 MS. Fader I
7 seize
8 in haste; MS. of heven (em. sugg. by M.)
9 promptly
10 MS. hym to

Lord[1] God, I thanke þe with all my hart,
For I am glad that I schall leve,[2]

And kys onys my dere moder.

Abraham. Now be ryght[3] myry, my [owyne] swete ch
For thys qwyke best þat ys so myld
Here I present[4] before all other.

Isaac. And I wyll fast begynne to blowe;
Thys fyer schall brene[5] a full good sped.[6]
But, fader, wyll[7] I stowppe downe lowe,
Ȝe wyll not kyll me with ȝowr swerd,[8] I trowe?

Abraham. Noo, har[de]ly,[9] swet son, have no dred,
My mornyng[10] ys past.

Isaac. I[11] woold þat swerd[8] wer in a gled,[12]
For[13] yt make[th][14] me full yll agast.

Here ABRAHAM *mad hys offryng, knelyng,*
seyyng th

Abraham. Now, Lord God of heven in Trynyte,
Allmyty God omnipotent,
My offeryng I make in the worchope of the,
And with thys qweke best I the present;
Lord, reseyve thow myn intent,
As [thow][15] art God, and grownd[16] of owr grace.

[*God speaks from hea*

God. Abraham, Abraham, wyll[17] mot thow sped,[18]
And Ysaac, þi ȝowng son the by!

1 MS. but Lord
2 live
3 MS. rygth
4 MS. schall present
5 burn
6 speed; MS. spyd
7 while
8 MS. sword
9 certainly; em. M.
10 mourning
11 MS. ȝa but I
12 fire (?); MS. glad (em. M.)
13 MS. for iwys fac
14 em. suggested b
15 em. M.
16 foundation, sour
17 well
18 prosper

Truly, Abraham, for thys dede
I schall multyplye ȝowr bother[1] sede
As thyke as sterres be in the skye,

Bothe more and lesse;
And as thyke as gravell in the see,
So[2] multyplyed ȝowr sede schall be;
Thys grant I ȝow for ȝowr goodnesse.

Off ȝow schall cume frowte gret [won],[3]
And ever be in blysse withowt[en] end.[4]
For ȝe drede me as God alon,
And kepe my commawmentes everych[5] on,
My blyssyng I ȝeffe, wersoever ȝe wend.[6]

Abraham. Loo, Ysaac, my son, how thynke ȝe
Be thys warke that we have wroght[7]?
Full glad and blythe we may be,
Aȝens Gods wyll[8] þat we grucched nott

Upon thys fayer heth.[9]

Isaac. A, fader, I thanke owr Lord every dell
That my wyt servyd me so wyll
For to drede God more than my deth.[10]

Abraham. Why! dereworþy[11] son, wer thow adred?
Hardely,[12] chyld, tell me thy lore.[13]

Isaac. Ȝa, be my feyth, fader, now have[14] I red,[15]
I wos never soo afrayd before

As I have byn at ȝyn hyll.
But, be my feyth, fader, I swere
I wyll nevermore cume there
But yt be aȝens my wyll.

1 of you both; MS. ȝowres botheres
2 MS. so thyke
3 plenty; em. M.
4 MS. ȝynd
5 MS. everysch
6 MS. goo (em. H.)
7 MS. wrogth
8 MS. þe wyll of God
9 MS. hetth
10 MS. detth
11 precious; MS. -wordy
12 boldly, unhesitatingly
13 story, what is in thy mind
14 MS. hath (em. M.)
15 my senses

Abraham. Cum[1] on with me, my owyn swet sonn,
And homward fast now let us goon.

Isaac. Be[2] my feyth, fader, therto I on,[3]
I had never so good wyll hom to gon,[4]
And to speke with my dere moder.

Abraham. A! Lord of hevyn, I thanke the,
For now may I led hom with me
Ysaac, my ȝownge sonn so fre,
The gentyllest chyld above all other[5] —
Thys may I wyll avo[w to th]ee.[6]

Now goo we forthe, my blyssyd sonn.

Isaac. I grant, fader, and let us gon,
For, be my trowthe, wer I at home,
I wold never gon owt under that forme.[7]

I pray God ȝeffe us grace evermo,
And all tho[8] that we be holdyng[9] to. [*Exeun*[t]

EPILOGUE

Enter DOCTOR

Doctor. Lo, sovereyns and sorys,[10] now have we schewyd[11]
Thys solom story[12] to grete and smale;
It ys good lernyng to lernd and lewyd[13]
And þe wysest of us all,

Wythowtyn ony berryng.[14]
For thys story schewyt[h][15] ȝowe [her][16]

1 MS. ȝa cum
2 by
3 consent; MS. grant
4 MS. to gon hom
5 MS. erthe (em. S.)
6 MS. avoee
7 (?)
8 those; MS. thow
9 beholding
10 sirs
11 MS. schowyd
12 MS. story hath schowyd (em. H.)
13 ignorant
14 outcry, clamorous prote[st]
(see *NED.* under *bere*, sb.)
15 showeth; MS. schoyt
16 em. M.

How we schuld kepe, to owr po[we]re,[1]
  Goddes commawments withowt grochyng.

Trowe ȝe, sores, and[2] God sent an angell [to ȝow],
  And commawndyd ȝow ȝowr chyld to slayn,[3]
Be ȝowr trowthe, ys ther ony of ȝow
  That eyther wold groche or stryve therageyn[4]?

How thyngke ȝe now, sorys, therby?
  I trow ther be iij, or iiij, or moo.
And thys[5] women that wepe sorowfully
  Whan that hyr chyldryn dey them froo[6]—

  As nater woll[7] and kynd—
Yt ys but folly, I may well avow,[8]
To groche aȝens God or to greve ȝow,
For ȝe schall never se hym myschevyd,[9] I[10] know,
  Be lond nor watyr, have thys in mynd;

And groche not aȝens owr Lord God
  In welth or woo, wether[11] that he ȝow send,
Thow ȝe be never so hard bestad;
  For when he wyll, he may yt amend,

Hys comawmentes yf[12] ȝe kepe with good hart,
  As thys story hath now schewyd[13] ȝow befor[n]e,[14]
And feytheffully serve hym qwyll[15] ȝe be qvart,[16]
  That ȝe may plece God bothe evyn and morne.

  Now Jesu, that weryd[17] the crown of thorne,
    Bryng us all to hevyn blysse!

Finis.

[1] em. M.
[2] if
[3] MS. to smygth of ȝowr childes hed (em. H.)
[4] against this
[5] these
[6] die and leave them
[7] MS. woll woll (em. S.)
[8] MS. awooe
[9] afflicted
[10] MS. wyll I
[11] whichever
[12] MS. treuly yf
[13] MS. schowyd
[14] em. H.
[15] while
[16] healthy, sound
[17] MS. werry

THE YORK NATIVITY PLAY

The Earl of Ashburnham's manuscript (1430–1440), now MS. Brit. Mus. Add. 35,290, was edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith as *York Plays* (Oxford, 1885). Emendations are by Miss Smith (S.); Holthausen (H.), in Herrig's *Archiv* 85. 413; Kölbing (K.), in *Engl. Stud.* 20. 187. The stage-directions are modern. The form of the seven-line stanza should be noted: $abab^4c^2b^4c^2$.

SCENE I

Bethlehem. A stable. Enter JOSEPH *and* MARY

Jos. Allweldand[1] God in Trinite,
I praye þe, Lord, for thy grete myght,
Unto thy symple servand see,
Here in þis place wher we are pight,[2]
Oureself allone;
Lord, graunte us gode herberow[3] þis nyght
Within þis wone.[4]

For we haue sought both uppe and doune,
Thurgh diverse stretis in þis cite;
So mekill pepull is comen to towne,
Þat we can nowhare herbered be,
Slike prees[5] it is[6];
Forsuthe I can no socoure see,
But belde[7] with bestes.[8]

And yf we here all nyght abide,
We shall be stormed in þis steede[9];
Þe walles are doune on ilke a side,
Þe ruffe is rayned[10] aboven oure hede,
Als have I roo.[11]
Say, Marie, doughtir, what is thy rede[12]?
How sall we doo?

[1] almighty
[2] pitched, settled
[3] harbor, shelter
[4] place, dwelling
[5] such a crowd
[6] MS. þer is slike prees
[7] lodge
[8] MS. belde us with þere bestes (em. H., K.)
[9] place
[10] wet with ra
[11] rest, peace
[12] counsel

Now will be borne of my body
Both God and Man togedir in feere,[1]
Bliste mott he be!
Jesu, my Son þat is so dere,
Now borne is he!— [MARY *worships the child.*

Hayle, my Lord God! hayle, Prince of pees!
Hayle, my Fadir! and hayle, my Sone!
Hayle sovereyne Sege,[2] all synnes to sesse[3]!
Hayle, God and Man in erth to wonne[4]!
Hayle! thurgh whos myht
All þis worlde was first begonne,
Merknes and light.

Sone, as I sugett[5] am of thyne,
Vowchesaffe, swete Sone, [for so] I pray þe,
That I myght þe take in armys myne,[6]
And in þis povre wede arraie[7] þe.
Graunte me þi[s] blisse,
As I am thy modir chosen to be
In sothfastnesse.

SCENE II

Outside the stable. Enter JOSEPH

Jos. A, Lorde! what[8] the wedir is colde!
Þe fellest[9] freese[10] þat evere I felyd.
I pray God helpe þam þat is olde,[11]
And namely[12] þam þat is vnwelde,[13]
So may I saie.
Now, gud God, þou be my belde,[14]
As þou best may. [*A sudden light shines.*

[1] together (redundant)
[2] seat, throne
[3] cease
[4] dwell
[5] subject; MS. am sympill sugett (K. omits sympill)
[6] MS. þe armys of myne
[7] MS. to araie
[8] how
[9] cruelest
[10] frost
[11] MS. alde
[12] especially
[13] weak
[14] shelter; MS. brilde (em. S.)

A, Lord God! what light is þis
  Þat comes shynyng þus sodenly?
I can not saie, als have I blisse.
  When I come home unto Marie,
    Þan sall I spirre.[1] [*Exit.*

SCENE III

Within the stable. Enter JOSEPH *to* MARY

[*Jos.*] A! here[d][2] be God, for nowe come I.
  Mar. Ȝe ar welcum, sirre.

Jos. Say, Marie doghtir, what chere with þe?
Mar. Right goode, Joseph, as has been ay.
Jos. What[3] swete thyng is þat on thy kne?
Mar. It is my Sone, þe soth to saye,
    Þat is so gud.
Jos. Wele is me I bade[4] þis day
    To se þis Foode[5]!

Me merveles mekill of þis light,
Þat þusgates[6] shynes in þis place,
Forsuth it is a selcouth[7] sight!
Mar. Þis hase he ordand[8] of his grace,
    My Sone so ȝing,
A starne[9] to be shynyng a space
    At his bering.[10]

For Balam tolde ful longe beforne
How þat a sterne shulde rise full hye,[11]
And of a maiden shulde be borne[12]

1 ask, inquire
2 em. K.
3 MS. O Marie what (em. H.)
4 awaited
5 child (*lit.*, one fed)
6 thus
7 strange, unusual
8 ordained
9 star
10 birth
11 Num. 24. 17
12 Isa. 7. 14

A Sone[1] þat sall oure saffyng[2] be
Fro caris kene.
Forsuth it is my Sone so free
Whame he gan mene.[3]

Jos. Nowe welcome, Floure fairest of hewe!
I shall þe menske[4] with mayne and myght.
Hayle, my Maker! hayle, Crist Jesu!
Hayle, riall[5] Kyng, Roote of all right!
Hayle, Saveour!
Hayle, my Lorde, Lemer[6] of light!
Hayle, blessid Floure!

Mar. Nowe, Lord, þat all þis worlde schall wynn
To þe, my Sone, is þat I saye,
Here is no bedde to laye the inne,
Þerfore, my dere Sone, I þe praye,
Sen it is so,
Here in þis cribbe I myght þe lay
Betweene bestis[7] two.

And I sall happe[8] þe, myn owne dere Childe,
With such clothes as we have here.
Jos. Marie,[9] beholde þes beestis mylde,
They make lovyng in ther manere
As þei wer men;
Forsothe it semes wele be ther chere[10]
Þare Lord þei ken.[11]

Mar. Ther Lorde þai kenne, þat wate I wele—
They worshippe hym with myght and mayne.
The wedir is colde, as ye may fele;

[1] MS. sonne
[2] salvation
[3] mean; MS. be whame Balam gon mene (em. H.)
[4] worship
[5] royal
[6] flasher forth
[7] MS. þer bestis (em. H., K.)
[8] wrap
[9] MS. O Mari[e]
[10] look
[11] know, recog[nize]

To halde[1] hym warme þei are full fayne
With þare warme breth,
And oondis[2] on hym. Is noght to layne[3]
To warme hym with?

Nowe[4] slepis my Sone, blist mot he be!
And lyes full warme þer bestis bytwene.
Jos. Nowe[4] is fulfilled, forsuth I see,
Þat Abacuc in mynde gon mene,
By[5] prophicie:
He saide oure Savyoure shall be sene
Betwene bestis lye;

And nowe I see þe same in sight.
Mar. Ȝa, sir, forsuth þe same is he.
Jos. Honnoure and worshippe both day and nyght,
Aylastand Lorde, be done to þe,
As[6] is worthy!
And to[7] thy service I oblissh[8] me
With herte[9] holy.

Mar. Þou mercyfull Maker most myghty,
My God, my Lorde, my Sone so free,
Thy handemayden forsoth am I,
And to thi service I oblissh me,
With herte[9] entere.[10]
Thy blissing, [now], beseke I thee,
Graunte[11] us in[12] feere.

[1] keep
[2] breathe
[3] borrow
[4] MS. O nowe (em. K.)
[5] MS. and preched by (em. K.)
[6] MS. all way as (em. K.)
[7] MS. lord to (em. K.)
[8] oblige me, bind myself
[9] MS. all myn herte (em. K.)
[10] entire, whole
[11] MS. þou graunte (em. K.)
[12] MS. all in (em. K.)

8. Abacuc: the allusion is to the apocryphal Pseudo-Matthew, chap. 14, which reads: 'Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Habakkuk the prophet, who said, Between two animals thou art made known.' The reference here is to Hab. 3. 2, where the Septuagint version reads: 'Thou shalt be known between the two living creatures.'

THE SECOND TOWNELEY SHEPHERDS' PLAY (SECUNDA PASTORUM)

Gayley thus characterizes this piece (*Plays of our Forefathers*, p. 182): 'The Wakefield *Secunda* . . . is plot within plot, developed through eight closely consecutive scenes, and crowded with action. The comic adventure is indeed but an episode — this "sheep stealing of Mak" — but it has its beginning, middle, and end; the motive, the devices, and the progress of a comedietta in itself. It grows out of and belongs to the conditions with which the enveloping action opens, and its party of the second part are also dramatic persons in the main action. . . . As a work of dramatic genius this little play, with its home-made philosophy, home-made figures, and home-made humor, with its comic business, its sometimes boisterous spirits, its quiet and shrewd irony, its ludicrous diction, its revelation of rural manners, its simple and healthful creed, its radiant and naïve devoutness, its dramatic anticipations, postponements, and surprises, stands out English and alone, and a masterpiece.' The three shepherds he thus describes (pp. 182–3): 'Coll, the first shepherd, who soliloquizes concerning political philosophy, a kind of later fourteenth-century populist whom it refreshes to grumble; . . . Gyb, the second shepherd, whose vein is of matrimonial philosophy; . . . and Daw, the hind, whose philosophy is eclectic, who swears by the unborn Christ and Saint Nicholas, and "lets the world pass." He it is who sees "sudden sights in the darkness"; who warns of the midnight-stalking Mak; who makes that "Yoman" of the king lie safely down between them; it is he, too, who dreams of the stolen sheep, and conducts the vain search therefor; and who, fortunately flinging back to Mak's home to give the hypothetical babe, "that little day starne," a "saxpence," lifts up the clout and diagnoses the fraud that has been practised upon them.' According to Pollard (*English Miracle Plays*, p. 189), Mak is probably adapted from the favorite comic character, the conjurer and buffoon Maugis, of the romance of the *Four Sons of Aymon*. Pollard's general estimate is (England's edition, p. xxx): 'The *Secunda Pastorum* . . . is really perfect as a work of art.'

The play is written, like four others in the Towneley series — *Noah*, *Prima Pastorum*, *Herod*, and the *Buffeting* — and parts of others (cf. Pollard's remarks in England's edition, pp. xxi ff.; Gayley, *op. cit.*, pp. 163 ff.) in a nine-line stanza rhyming $aaaa^4b^1ccc^2b^1$, where the superior numbers denote the number of feet in the line (the a-lines have each four feet, for instance). In reality, however, there are four rhymes to the stanza, instead of three, since each of the a-lines has a rhyme in the middle; the scheme may therefore be represented thus (cf. Pollard, p. xxii): $abababab^2c^1ddd^2c^1$. All the stanzas save one (535 14 ff.) are constructed on this model, and that has lost two of the four opening lines.

Not to mention earlier editions, the play was printed in 1897 by England (*The Towneley Plays*, E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser., No. 71, pp. 116–40), and by Manly

In stormes and tempest —
Now in the eest, now in the west.
Wo is hym has never rest
Mydday nor morow !

Bot we sely[1] husbandys[2] that walkys on the moore,
In fayth we are nerehandys outt of the doore.[3]
No wonder, as it standys, if we be poore,
Ffor the tylthe[4] of oure landys lyys falow as the floore,
As ye ken.
We ar so lamyd,[5]
Ffortaxed[6] and ramyd,[7]
We ar mayde handtamyd[8]
With[9] thyse gentlery-men.[10]

Thus thay refe[11] us oure rest — oure Lady theym wary[12] !
These men that ar lord-fest,[13] thay cause the ploghe tary.
That[14] men say is for the best, we fynde it contrary;
Thus ar husbandys opprest, in po[i]nte to[15] myscary
On lyfe.
Thus hold thay us hunder,
Thus thay bryng us in blonder[16];
It were greatte wonder
And[17] ever shuld we thryfe.

Ther[18] shall com a swa[y]ne[19] as prowde as a po[20];
He must borow my wa[y]ne,[21] my ploghe also;
Then I am full fa[y]ne[22] to graunt or[23] he go.
Thus lyf we in payne, anger, and wo,
By nyght and day;

[1] helpless, miserable
[2] husbandmen (see l. 17); MS. shepardes (em. suggested by M.)
[3] nearly homeless
[4] surface (?) (there is arable land among the moors)
[5] MS. hamyd (em. H.)
[6] overtaxed
[7] oppressed
[8] reduced to submission
[9] by
[10] gentry
[11] take from
[12] curse
[13] bound to a lord
[14] what
[15] in peril of; em. E.
[16] confusion, trouble
[17] if
[18] MS. transposes this stanza and the next (em. K.)
[19] swain
[20] peacock
[21] wagon
[22] MS. swane, wane, fane (em. K.)
[23] ere

Som ar wo that has any,
Bot so far [as] can[1] I,
Wo is hym that has many,
Ffor he felys sore.

Bot, yong men, of[2] wowyng, for God that you boght,
Be well war[3] of wedyng, and thynk in youre thoght:
'Had I wyst[4]' is a thyng it servys of noght.
Mekyll styll mowrnyng has wedyng home broght,
And grefys,
With many a sharp showre;
Ffor thou may cach in an owre
That shall [savour][5] fulle sowre
As long as thou lyffys.

Ffor — as ever red I pystyll[6]! — I have oone to my fere[7]
As sharp as a thystyll, as rugh as a brere;
She is browyd[8] lyke a brystyll, with a sowre-loten[9] chere[10];
Had she oones wett hyr whystyll, she couth syng full clere
Hyr Pater Noster.
She is as greatt as a whall[11];
She has a galon of gall;
By hym that dyed for us all,
I wald I had ryn[12] to[13] I had lost hir[14]!

Coll. 'God looke over the raw[15]!' Ffull defly[16] ye stand!
Gib. Yee, the dewill in thi maw so tariand[17]!
Sagh thou awre[18] of Daw?
Coll. Yee, on a ley[19] land
Hard I hym blaw. He commys here at hand,
Not far,

[1] know
[2] as to
[3] beware well
[4] known
[5] em. E.
[6] epistle
[7] for my mate
[8] has brows
[9] sour-looking
[10] expression
[11] whale
[12] run
[13] till
[14] 'I wald I had lost hir' would be more metrical
[15] row
[16] deaf
[17] tarrying
[18] anywhere; MS. awro (see *NED.* s.v. *owhere*)
[19] fallow, unplowed

Lord, thyse winds[1] ar spytus,[2] and the weders[3] full kene,
And the frostys so hydus[4] thay water myn eeyne —
No ly.[5]
Now in dry, now in wete,
Now in snaw, now in slete;
When my shone[6] freys to my fete,
It is not all esy.

Bot as far as I ken, or yit as I go,
We sely wedmen[7] dre[8] mekyll wo,
We have sorow then and then, it fallys oft so.
Sely Capyle, oure hen, both to and fro
She kakyls,
Bot begyn she to crok,
To groyne,[9] or [to clo]k,[10]
Wo is hym[11] oure cok,
Ffor he is in the shakyls[12]!

These men that ar wed have not all thare wyll;
When they ar full hard sted,[13] thay sygh full styll;
God wayte[14] thay ar led full hard and full yll;
In bower nor in bed thay say noght thertyll
This tyde.
My parte have I fun,[15]
I know my lesson:
Wo is hym that is bun,[16]
Ffor he must abyde.[17]

Bot now late in oure lyfys (a mervell to me,
That I thynk my hart ryfys[18] sich wonders to see —
What that destany dryfys it shuld so be!)
Som men wyll have two wyfys, and som men thre
In store!

1 MS. weders (em. suggested by M.)
2 spiteful
3 storms
4 hideous
5 lie
6 shoes
7 See line 17, below
8 endure, suffer
9 grumble
10 em. E.
11 MS. hym is of (em. suggested by M.)
12 shackles, bonds of wedlock; MS. shekyls
13 beset
14 knows
15 found
16 bound
17 stay as he is
18 is riven asunder

Som ar wo that has any,
Bot so far [as] can[1] I,
Wo is hym that has many,
Ffor he felys sore.

Bot, yong men, of[2] wowyng, for God that you boght,
Be well war[3] of wedyng, and thynk in youre thoght:
'Had I wyst[4]' is a thyng it servys of noght.
Mekyll styll mowrnyng has wedyng home broght,
And grefys,
With many a sharp showre;
Ffor thou may cach in an owre
That shall [savour][5] fulle sowre
As long as thou lyffys.

Ffor — as ever red I pystyll[6]! — I have oone to my fere[7]
As sharp as a thystyll, as rugh as a brere;
She is browyd[8] lyke a brystyll, with a sowre-loten[9] chere[10];
Had she oones wett hyr whystyll, she couth syng full clere
Hyr Pater Noster.
She is as greatt as a whall[11];
She has a galon of gall;
By hym that dyed for us all,
I wald I had ryn[12] to[13] I had lost hir[14]!

Coll. 'God looke over the raw[15]!' Ffull defly[16] ye stand!
Gib. Yee, the dewill in thi maw so tariand[17]!
Sagh thou awre[18] of Daw?
Coll. Yee, on a ley[19] land
Hard I hym blaw. He commys here at hand,
Not far,

1 know
2 as to
3 beware well
4 known
5 em. E.
6 epistle
7 for my mate
8 has brows
9 sour-looking
10 expression
11 whale
12 run
13 till
14 'I wald I had lost hir' would be more metrical
15 row
16 deaf
17 tarrying
18 anywhere; MS. awro (see *NED*. s.v. *owhere*)
19 fallow, unplowed

Stand styll.
Gib. Qwhy?
Coll. Ffor he commys, hope I.
Gib. He wyll make us both a ly[1]
Bot-if we be war.[2]

Enter DAW, *the Third Shepherd. At first he thinks himself alone*

Daw. Crystys crosse me spede and Sant Nycholas!
Therof had I nede, it is wars then it was.
Whoso couthe take hede and lett the warld pas,
It is ever in drede, and brekyll[3] as glas,
And slythys.[4]
This warld fowre[5] never so,
With mervels mo and mo —
Now in weyll,[6] now in wo,
And all thyng wrythys.[7]

Was never syn Noe[8] floode sich floodys seyn,
Wyndys and ranys so rude, and stormes so keyn —
Som stamerd, som stod in dowte, as I weyn.
Now God turne all to good! I say as I mene,
Ffor ponder:
These floodys so thay drowne,
Both in feyldys and in towne,
And berys all downe,
And that is a wonder! [*Catches sight of the others.*

We that walk on the nyghtys, oure catell to kepe,
We se sodan syghtys, when othere men slepe.
Yit me thynk my hart lyghtys,[9] I se shrewys[10] pepe.
[*Still soliloquizing.*
Ye ar two [t]all[11] wyghtys — I wyll gyff my shepe
A turne.

[1] lie
[2] wary
[3] brittle
[4] slides
[5] fared
[6] weal
[7] turns, changes
[8] Noah's
[9] grows light
[10] rascals
[11] em. Kittredge

— Bot full yll have I ment[1]:
As I walk on this bent,[2]
I may lyghtly repent,
My toes if I spurne.[3]
[*He first addresses* COLL, *then his master,* GIB.
A, sir, God you save, and master myne!
— A drynk fayn wold I have, and somwhat to dyne.

Coll. Crystys curs, my knave, thou art a ledyr[4] hyne[5]!
Gib. What, the boy lyst rave! Abyde unto syne[6];
We have made[7] it.
Yll thryft on thy pate!
Though the shrew cam late,
Yit is he in state
To dyne, if he had it.

Daw. Sich servandys as I, that swettys and swynkys,[8]
Etys oure brede full dry, and that me forthynkys.[9]
We ar oft weytt and wery when master-men wynkys,[10]
Yit commys full lately[11] both dyners and drynkys.
Bot nately[12]
Both oure dame and oure syre,
When we have ryn in the myre,
Thay can nyp[13] at oure hyre,
And pay us full lately.

Bot here my trouth, master, for the fayr[14] that ye make,
I shall do therafter[15] — wyrk as I take;
I shall do a lytyll, sir, and emang[16] ever lake,[17]
Ffor yit lay my soper never on my stomake
In feyldys.

[1] planned (to visit the sheep, since he may stumble in the dark)
[2] heath, open field
[3] stub
[4] worthless
[5] hind
[6] wait till later
[7] finished; MS. mayde
[8] toil
[9] grieves
[10] sleep
[11] reluctantly, after the proper time
[12] to some purpose, thoroughly
[13] take away bits
[14] wages
[15] in proportion
[16] the whole time
[17] be lacking

Wherto shuld I threpe[1]?
With my staf can I lepe,
And men say, 'Lyght chepe[2]
Letherly[3] foryeldys.[4]'

Coll. Thou were an yll lad to ryde on[5] wowyng
With a man that had bot lytyll of spendyng.
Gib. Peasse, boy, I bad! — no more jangling,
Or I shall make the full rad,[6] by the hevens Kyng,
With thy gawdys[7]!
Wher ar oure shepe, boy, we skorne[8]?
Daw. Sir, this same day at morne
I thaym left in the corne,
When thay rang lawdys[9];

Thay have pasture good, thay can not go wrong.
Coll. That is right, by the roode! thyse nyghtys ar long;
Yit I wold, or we yode,[10] oone gaf us a song.
Gib. So I thoght as I stode — to myrth us emong.[11]
Daw. I grauntt.
Coll. Lett me syng the tenory.
Gib. And I the tryble so hye.
Daw. Then the meyne[12] fallys to me;
Lett se how you chauntt. [*They*

Enter Mak, *with a cloak thrown over his tunic*[13]

Mak. Now, Lord, for thy naymes vii, that made both moyn and sta
Well mo then I can neven,[14] thi will, Lorde, of me tharnys[15];
I am all uneven[16] — that moves oft my harnes[17];
Now wold God I were in heven, for the[re][18] wepe no barnes[19]
So styll!

1 complain
2 easy bargain
3 badly
4 repays
5 a-
6 frightened
7 tricks
8 (?)
9 lauds (before daybreak)
10 before we went
11 to gladden us the while
12 middle part
13 MS. Tunc intrat Mak, in clamide
14 name
15 lacks
16 at odds, at sixes and s
17 brains
18 em. E.
19 children

Coll. Who is that pypys so poore?
Mak. Wold God ye wyst how I foore[1]!
[*Coll.*[2]] Lo, a man that walkys on the moore,
And has not all his wyll!

Gib. Mak, where has thou gon[3]? Tell us tythyng.[4]
Daw. Is he commen? Then ylk on take hede to his thyng.[5]
[*Snatches his own cloak from* MAK.[6]
Mak. What! Ich be a yoman, I tell you, of the king.
[*Pretending not to know them.*
The self and the same, sond[7] from a greatt lordyng,
And sich.[8]
Ffy on you! Goyth hence
Out of my presence!
I must have reverence —
Why, who be Ich?

Coll. Why make ye it so qwaynt,[9] Mak? Ye do wrang.
Gib. Bot, Mak, lyst ye saynt[10]? I trow that ye lang.[11]
Daw. I trow the shrew[12] can paynt,[13] the dewyll myght hym hang!
Mak. Ich shall make complaynt, and make you all to thwang,[14]
At a worde,
And tell evyn[15] how ye doth.
Coll. Bot, Mak, is that sothe?
Now take outt that sothren[16] tothe,
And sett in a torde[17]!

Gib. Mak, the dewill in youre ee! A stroke wold I leyne[18] you.
Daw. Mak, know ye not me? By God, I couthe teyn[19] you.
Mak. God looke[20] you all thre! Me thoght I had sene you.
[*As if recognizing them.*

[1] fared
[2] em. Child
[3] MS. gom (em. E.)
[4] news
[5] property
[6] MS. & accipit clamidem ab ipso
[7] messenger
[8] so forth
[9] do you behave so strangely
[10] play the saint
[11] are restless (love change?)
[12] rascal
[13] deceive
[14] to be whipped
[15] exactly
[16] southern (Child understands 'deceitful')
[17] piece of dung
[18] lend
[19] trouble
[20] bless

Ye ar a fare compane.
Coll. Can ye now mene you[1]?
Gib. Shrew, jape[2]!
Thus late as thou goys,
What wyll men suppos?
And thou has an yll noys[3]
Of stelyng of shepe.

Mak. And I am trew as steyll, all men waytt[4];
Bot a sekenes I feyll that haldys[5] me full haytt[6]:
My belly farys not weyll, it is out of astate.
Daw. 'Seldom lyys the dewyll dede by the gate.'
Mak. Therfor
Full sore am I and yll,
If I stande stone-styll.
I ete not an nedyll[7]
Thys moneth and more.

Coll. How farys thi wyff? By my hoode, how farys sho?
Mak. Lyys walteryng,[8] by the roode, by the fyere, lo!
And a howse full of brude[9]; she drynkys well, to.
Yll spede othere good that she wyll do!
Bot s[h]o[10]
Etys as fast as she can;
And ilk yere that commys to man
She bryngys furth a lakan,[11]
And, som yeres, two.

Bot were I not more gracy[o]us,[12] and rychere be[13] far,
I were[14] eten outt of howse and of harbar[15];
Yit is she a fowll dowse,[16] if ye com nar;
Ther is none that trowse nor knowys a war[17]
Then ken I.

[1] remember
[2] make jokes
[3] reputation
[4] know
[5] keeps
[6] hot
[7] particle, bit
[8] rolling about
[9] brood, children
[10] em. H.
[11] baby (*lit.* toy)
[12] prosperous
[13] by
[14] should be
[15] shelter
[16] doxy
[17] worse

Now wyll ye se what I profer:
To gyf all in my cofer
To-morne at next[1] to offer
Hyr hed-maspenny.[2]

Coll. I am cold and nakyd, and wold have a fyere.
Gib. I wote so forwakyd[3] is none in this shyre!
I wold slepe if[4] I takyd les to my hyere.[5]
Daw. I am wery, forrakyd,[6] and run in the myre—
Wake thou!
Gib. Nay, I wyll lyg downe by,
Ffor I must slepe truly.
Daw. As good a mans son was I
As any of you.[7]

Bot, Mak, com heder! betwene shall thou lyg downe.
Mak. Then myght I lett[8] you bedene[9] of that ye wold rowne.[10]
No drede. [*He says his prayers.*
'Ffro my top to my too,

[1] at length (?)
[2] funeral dues (see 6 22)
[3] weary with waking
[4] even if
[5] hire
[6] worn out with walking
[7] Two lines are apparently lost here
[8] hinder
[9] completely
[10] whisper

5. **Coll**: MS. gives this line to Daw, and makes it follow Gib's next speech; but Gib's speech requires Daw's next as an immediate answer.

8. **Daw**: MS. assigns this to Coll, but Daw and his master, Gib, are having a dispute as to who shall keep awake.

17. In the *Prima Pastorum* (290–5), one of the shepherds says, as they prepare to lie down:

Ffor ferde we be fryht, a crosse let us kest:
'Cryst-crosse, benedyght eest and west,
Ffor drede.
Jesus onazorus,
Crucyefixus,
Morcus, Andreus,
God be oure spede!'

Cf. the blessing in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* 292–300:

Therwith the nightspel seyde he anonrightes
On foure halves of the hous aboute,
And on the threshfold of the dore withoute:

'Jesu Crist, and sëynt Benedight,
Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,
For nightes verye, the white *Pater Noster*!
Where wentestow, seynt Petres soster?'

Manus tuas commendo,[1]
Poncio Pilato;
Cryst-crosse me spede!
[*While the* Shepherds *sleep on, he rises.*[2]

Now were tyme for a man that lakkys what he wold
To stalk prevely than unto a fold,
And neemly[3] to wyrk than, and be not to bold,
Ffor he might aby[4] the bargan, if it were told
At the endyng.
Now were tyme for to reyll[5];
Bot he nedys good counsell
That fayn wold fare weyll,
And has bot lytyll spendyng.[6] [*He works a spell.*

Bot abowte you a serkyll,[7] as rownde as a moyn,[8]
Kest[9] now[10] I wyll, tyll that it be noyn,
That ye lyg stone-styll to that I have doyne;
And I shall say thertyll of good wordys a foyne[11]:
'On hight,
Over youre heydys, my hand I lyft.
Outt go youre een! fordo[12] your syght!'—
Bot yit I must make better shyft,
And[13] it be right.

Lord, what[14] thay slepe hard!—that may ye all here.
Was I never a shepard, bot now wyll I lere[15];
If the flok be skard,[16] yit shall I nyp[17] nere.
How! drawes hederward! Now mendys oure chere
Ffrom[18] sorow;

1 Cf. Luke 23. 46
2 MS. Tunc surgit, pastoribus dormientibus, & dicit:
3 nimbly
4 atone for
5 ramble
6 money to spend
7 circle (a magician's imaginary circle)
8 *oy* phonetically ≃ ō in this text
9 cast (see note on 535 17)
10 MS. to I have done that; but this seems to have been anticipated from next line by some scribe
11 few
12 destroy
13 if
14 how
15 learn
16 frightened
17 steal up
18 MS. (ffron em. E.)

A fatt shepe, I dar say!
A good flese, dar I lay[1]!
Eftwhyte[2] when I may,
Bot this will I borow. [*Exit with the sheep.*

SCENE II

MAK'S *cottage.* *Enter* MAK

[*Mak.*] How, Gyll, art thou in? Gett us som lyght.
Gill. Who makys sich dyn this tyme of the nyght?
I am sett for to spyn, I hope not I myght
Ryse a penny to wyn,[3] I shrew[4] them on hight[5]!
So farys
A huswyff that has bene—
To be rasyd[6] thus betwene,[7]
Here may no note[8] be sene,
Ffor[9] sich small charys.[10]

Mak. Good wyff, open the hek[11]! Seys thou not what I bryng?
Gill. I may thole[12] the dray[13] the snek.[14] A, com in, my swetyng!
Mak. Yee, thou thar[15] not rek of[16] my long standyng.
[*Reproachfully.*
Gill. By the nakyd nek art thou lyke for to hyng.
Mak. Do way[17]!
I am worthy my mete,
Ffor, in a strate,[18] can I gett
More then thay that swynke and swette
All the long day. [*Shows* GILL *the sheep.*

Thus it fell to my lott, Gyll, I had sich grace.[19]
Gill. It were a fowll blott to be hanged for the case.

1 wager
2 return, repay
3 I do not expect that I could gain a penny by rising
4 curse
5 aloud, openly
6 rushed
7 ever and anon
8 work (i.e. completed task)
9 because of
10 jobs
11 inner door
12 suffer
13 to draw
14 latch
15 need
16 care about
17 get along
18 at a pinch
19 luck

Mak. I have skapyd, Jelott,[1] oft as hard a glase.[2]
Gill. 'Bot so long goys the pott to the water,' men says,
'At last
Comys it home broken.'
Mak. Well knowe I the token,
Bot let it never be spoken! —
Bot com and help fast.

I wold he were slayn, I lyst well ete[3];
This twelmo[n]the[4] was I not so fayn of oone shepe-mete.[5]
Gill. Com thay or[6] he be slayn, and here the shepe blete —
Mak. Then myght I be tane. That were a cold swette!
Go spar[7]
The gaytt[8] doore.
Gill. Yis, Mak.
Ffor and thay com at thy bak —
Mak. Then myght I far, by[9] all the pak,
The dewill of the war.[10]

Gill. A good bowrde[11] have I spied, syn thou can[12] none:
Here shall we hym hyde, to[13] thay be gone,
In my credyll.[14] — Abyde[15]! Lett me alone! —
And I shall lyg besyde in chyl[d]bed, and grone.
Mak. Thou red,[16]
And I shall say thou was lyght[17]
Of a knave[18] childe this nyght.
Gill. Now well is me day[19] bright
That ever was I bred!

This is a good gyse,[20] and a far[e] cast,[21]
Yit a woman[s] avyse helpys at the last.

[1] French form of 'Gill' (?)
[2] rub, swipe, plight (*lit.* blow)
[3] greatly desire to eat
[4] em. K.
[5] meal of mutton
[6] ere
[7] fasten
[8] outer
[9] fare, at the hands of; MS. by for (em. Skeat, Logeman)
[10] the devil the worse, a devilish deal worse
[11] jest
[12] knowest
[13] until
[14] cradle
[15] wait
[16] make ready
[17] delivered
[18] boy
[19] the day
[20] way
[21] clever contrivance

I wote never who spyse; agane go thou fast.
Mak. Bot[1] I com[2] or thay ryse, els blawes a cold blast!
I wyll go slepe.
Yit slepys all this meneye,[3]
And I shall go stalk prevely,
As it had never bene I
That caryed thare shepe.

SCENE III

The moors near Horbury

Enter COLL, GIB, DAW, *and* MAK

Coll. *Resurrex a mortruis!* have hald my hand!
Judas carnas dominus! I may not well stand.
My foytt slepys, by Jesus! and I water-fastand.[4]
I thoght that we layd us full nere Yngland.
Gib. A! ye!
Lord, what I have slept weyll!
As fresh as an eyll[5];
As lyght I me feyll[6]
As leyfe on a tre!

Daw. Benste[7] be herein! So my body[8] qwakys
My hart is outt of skyn, what so it makys.
Who makys all this dyn? So my browes blakys,[9]
To the dowore[10] wyll I wyn. Harke, felows, wakys!
We were fowre;
Se ye awre[11] of Mak now?
Coll. We were up or thou.
Gib. Man, I gyf God avowe
Yit yede[12] he na owre.[13]

[1] unless
[2] reach there
[3] company
[4] fasting on water
[5] eel
[6] feel myself
[7] a blessing
[8] MS. illegible; E., H. hart; Kittredge, M. body
[9] grow black
[10] door
[11] anywhere
[12] went
[13] nowhere; MS. owre

Daw. Me thoght he was lapt in a wolfe-skyn.
Coll. So are many hapt now, namely[1] within.
Daw.[2] When we had long napt, me thoght with a gyn[3]
A fatt shepe he trapt, bot he mayde no dyn.
Gib.[4] Be styll,
Thi dreme makys the woode[5];
It is bot fantom, by the roode!
Coll. Now God turne all to good,
If it be his wyll.

Gib. Ryse, Mak, for shame! Thou lygys right lang.
Mak. Now, Crystys holy name be us emang!
What is this? For Sant Jame, I may not well gang!
I trow I be the same. A, my nek has lygen wrang
Enoghe!
Mekill thank! Syn yistereven,
Now, by Sant Stevyn,[6]
I was flayd[7] with a swevyn,[8]
My hart out ofsloghe.[9]

I thoght Gyll began to crok, and travell[10] full sad,
Wel ner[11] at the fyrst cok, of a yong lad
Ffor to mend oure flok; then be I never glad—
I have tow on my rok more then ever I had.
A, my heede!
A house full of yong tharmes!
The dewill knok outt thare harnes[12]!
Wo is hym has many barnes,
And therto lytyll brede!

[1] especially
[2] MS. ii pastor (em. M.)
[3] snare, trap
[4] MS. iii pastor (em. M.)
[5] mad
[6] MS. strevyn (em. H.)
[7] tormented
[8] dream
[9] which smote my heart out (?)
[10] travail
[11] well nigh
[12] brains

22. rok: distaff; the phrase means 'business to attend to' (cf. Chaucer, *Miller's Tale* 588 (A 3774), and Skeat's note).

24. tharmes: children (*lit.* bowels, Lat. *viscera*; cf. Ovid, *Met.* 8. 478; Shakespeare, *M. for M.* 3. 1. 29).

I must go home, by youre lefe, to Gyll, as I thoght,
I pray you looke[1] my slefe,[2] that I steyll noght;
I am loth you to grefe, or from you take oght. [*Exit* MAK.
Daw. Go furth, yll myght thou chefe[3]! Now wold I we soght
This morne
That we had all oure store.
Coll. Bot I will go before.
Let us mete.
Gib. Whore?
Daw. At the crokyd thorne.

SCENE IV

MAK'S *cottage.* MAK *enters*

Mak. Undo this doore! Who is here? How long shall I stand?
Gill. Who makys sich a bere[4]? Now walk in the wenyand.
Mak. A, Gyll, what chere? It is I, Mak, youre husbande.
Gill. Then may we se[5] here the dewill in a bande,[6]
Syr Gyle[7]!
Lo, he commys with a lote[8]
As he were holden in the throte.
I may not syt at my note[9]
A handlang-while[10]!

Mak. Wyll ye here what fare she makys to gett hir a glose[11]?
And dos noght bot lakys,[12] and clowse[13] hir toose.
Gill. Why, who wanders? Who wakys? Who commys? Who gose?
Who brewys? Who bakys? What makys me thus hose[14]?
And than

1 look in
2 sleeve
3 prosper
4 noise, clamor
5 MS. be (em. Kittredge)
6 bond, chain
7 Cf. p. 529, note 9
8 voice
9 work
10 an instant
11 pretext
12 amuse herself
13 strokes, caresses
14 hoarse

10. crokyd thorne: perhaps the Shepherds' Thorn of Mapplewell, three miles northwest of Barnsley, and distant about eight miles from Horbury (see England's ed., p. xiv).

13. wenyand: waning of the moon, i.e. unlucky time (cf. *wanion*, e.g. Shakespeare, *Per.* 2. 1. 17).

It is rewthe to beholde;
Now in hote, now in colde,
Ffull wofull is the houscholde
That wantys a woman.

Bot what ende has thou mayde with the hyrdys,[1] Mak?
Mak. The last worde that thay sayde when I turnyd my bak,
Thay wold looke that thay hade thare shepe all the pak.
I hope[2] thay wyll nott be well payde[3] when thay thare shepe lak,
Perde!
Bot howso the gam[4] gose,
To me thay wyll suppose,[5]
And make a fowll noyse,
And cry outt apon me.

Bot thou must do as thou hyght.[6]
Gill. I accorde me thertyll.
I shall swedyll[7] hym right in my credyll;
If it were a gretter slyght,[8] yit couthe I help tyll.
I wyll lyg downe stright,[9] com hap[10] me.
Mak. I wyll.
Gill. Behynde!
Com Coll and his maroo,[11]
Thay wyll nyp us full naroo.
Mak. Bot I may cry out 'Haroo!'
The shepe if thay fynde.

Gill. Harken ay when thay call — thay will com onone.
Com and make redy all, and syng by thyn oone[12];
Syng 'lullay' thou shall, for I must grone,
And cry outt by the wall on Mary and John,
Ffor sore.[13]

1 shepherds
2 suspect
3 pleased
4 sport
5 they will suspect me
6 promised
7 swaddle
8 trick
9 straightway
10 wrap, cover
11 companion = Gib (cf. Wordsworth's 'winsome marrow,' *Yarrow Unvisited*)
12 alone, by thyself
13 pain

Syng 'lullay' on fast
When thou heris at the last;
And, bot I play a fals cast,[1]
Trust me no more.

SCENE V

The moors near Horbury. Enter COLL, GIB, *and* DAW

Daw. A, Coll, goode morne, why slepys thou nott?
Coll. Alas, that ever was I borne! We have a fowll blott—
A fat wedir[2] have we lorne.
Daw. Mary, Godys forbott[3]!
Gib. Who shuld do us that skorne? That were a fowll spott.
Coll. Som shrewe.
I have soght with my dogys
All Horbery[4] shrogys,[5]
And, of xv hogys,[6]
Ffond I bot oone ewe.

Daw. Now trow me, if ye will—by Sant Thomas of Kent,[7]
Ayther Mak or Gyll was at that assent.[8]
Coll. Peasse, man, be still! I sagh when he went.
Thou sklanders hym yll, thou aght to repent
Goode spede.
Gib. Now as ever myght I the,[9]
If I shuld evyn here de,[10]
I wold say it were he
That dyd that same dede!

Daw. Go we theder, I rede,[11] and ryn[12] on oure feete.
Shall I never ete brede the sothe to[13] I weet.[14]

1 shrewd trick (on the shepherds)
2 wether
3 God forbid (*lit.* God's prohibition)
4 Horbury, four miles southwest of Wakefield, in Yorkshire
5 thickets
6 young sheep
7 Thomas à Becket
8 agreement, concerted action
9 prosper
10 die
11 counsel
12 Daw is always 'rynning'
13 till
14 know; MS. wytt (H. weete)

Coll. Nor drynk in my heede, with hym tyll I mete.
Gib. I wyll rest in no stede tyll that I hym grete,
My brothere.[1]
Oone[2] I will hight:
Tyll I se hym in sight,
Shall I never slepe one nyght
Ther[3] I do anothere.

SCENE VI

MAK'S *cottage.* MAK *singing within, and* GILL *groaning*

Daw. Will ye here how thay hak[4]? Oure syre lyst croyne.[5]
Coll. Hard[6] I never none crak[7] so clere out of toyne.[8]
Call on hym.
Gib. Mak! Undo youre doore soyne!
Mak. Who is that spak, as it were noyne,[9]
On loft[10]?
Who is that, I say?
Daw. Goode felowse, were it day—
Mak. As far as ye may,
Good, spekys soft

Over a seke woman's heede, that is at maylleasse[11];
I had lever be dede or she had any dyseasse.[12]
Gill. Go to anothere stede,[13] I may not well qweasse.[14]
Ich[15] fote that ye trede goys thorow my nese[16]
So hee.[17]
Coll. Tell us, Mak, if ye may,
How fare ye, I say?
Mak. Bot ar ye in this towne[18] to-day?—
Now how fare ye?

1 = Coll
2 one thing
3 where
4 jangle
5 croon
6 heard
7 bray, bawl
8 tune
9 noon
10 up there
11 distress (OF. *malaise*)
12 suffering
13 place
14 breathe (*lit.* wheeze)
15 each
16 nose
17 loud
18 farmstead

Ye have ryn in the myre, and ar weytt yit;
I shall make you a fyre, if ye will syt.
A nores[1] wold I hyre — thynk ye on[2] yit?
Well qwytt[3] is my hyre — my dreme this is itt —
A seson.[4]
I have barnes, if ye knew,
Well mo then enewe —
Bot we must drynk as we brew,
And that is bot reson.

I wold ye dynyd or ye yode.[5] Me thynk that ye swette.
Gib. Nay, nawther mendys oure mode[6] drynke nor mette.
Mak. Why, sir, alys[7] you oght bot goode?
Daw. Yee, oure shepe that we gett
Ar stollyn as thay yode; oure los is grette.
Mak. Syrs, drynkys!
Had I bene thore
Som shuld have boght it full sore.
Coll. Mary, som men trowes that ye wore,[8]
And that us forthynkys.[9]

Gib. Mak, som men trowys that it shuld be ye.
Daw. Ayther ye or youre spouse, so say we.
Mak. Now if ye have suspowse[10] to Gill or to me,
Com and rype[11] oure howse, and then may ye se
Who had hir[12] —
If I any shepe fott,[13]
Aythor cow or stott[14];
And Gyll, my wyfe, rose nott
Here syn she lade hir.

1 nurse
2 one
3 requited, earned
4 for a while
5 before you went
6 temper
7 ails
8 were
9 troubles
10 suspicion
11 search
12 the ewe
13 fetched
14 steer

As I am true and lele,[1] to God here I pray
That this be the fyrst mele that I shall ete this day.
Coll. Mak, as have I ceyll,[2] avyse the, I say —
'He lernyd tymely[3] to steyll that couth not say nay.'
Gill. I swelt[4]!
Outt, thefys, fro my wonys[5]!
Ye com to rob us, for the nonys.
Mak. Here ye not how she gronys?
Youre hartys shuld melt.

Gill. Outt, thefys, fro my barne! Negh[6] hym not thor[7]!
Mak. Wyst ye how she had farne,[8] youre hartys wold be sore.
Ye do wrang, I you warne, that thus commys before
To a woman that has farne — bot I say no more.
Gill. A, my medyll[9]! —
I pray to God so mylde,
If ever I you begyld,
That I ete[10] this chylde
That lygs in this credyll.

Mak. Peasse, woman, for Godys payn,[11] and cry not so!
Thou spyllys[12] thy bra[y]ne, and makys me full wo.
Gib. I trowe oure shepe be slayn. What finde ye two?
Daw. All wyrk we in vayn, as well may we go.
Bot hatters,[13]
I can fynde no flesh,
Hard nor nesh,[14]
Salt nor fresh,
Bot two tome[15] platers;

Whik[16] catell bot this, tame nor wylde,
None, as have I blys, as lowde as he smylde.[17]

[1] leal
[2] bliss
[3] early
[4] die
[5] dwelling
[6] approach
[7] there
[8] fared
[9] middle, inwards
[10] may eat
[11] i.e. on the cross
[12] dost injure
[13] except clothes (I can find nothing)
[14] soft
[15] empty
[16] quick, live
[17] smelled as strongly as he (the sheep)

Gill. No, so God me blys, and gyf me joy of my chylde!
Coll. We have merkyd[1] amys; I hold us begyld.
Gib. Syr, don[2]!—
Syr—oure Lady hym save!—
Is youre chyld a knave[3]?
Mak. Any lord myght hym have,
This chyld, to his son.

When he wakyns he kyppys[4] that joy is to se.
Daw. In good tyme to hys hyppys,[5] and in cele.[6]
Bot who were[7] his gossyppys,[8] so sone rede[9]?
Mak. So fare fall thare lyppys[10]!
Coll. Hark now, a le[11]! [*Aside.*
Mak. So God thaym thank—
Parkyn, and Gybon Waller, I say,
And gentill John Horne, in good fay;
He made all the garray[12]—
With the greatt shank.

Gib. Mak, freyndys will we be, ffor we ar all oone.
Mak. We? Now I hald for me,[13] for mendys[14] gett I none!
Ffare well all thre, all[15] glad were ye gone.
[*The shepherds leave the house.*
Daw. 'Ffare wordys may ther be, bot luf is ther none'
This yere.
Coll. Gaf ye the chyld anythyng?
Gib. I trow not oone farthyng[16]!
Daw. Ffast agane will I flyng;
Abyde ye me here.[17] [*Goes back to the house.*

Mak, take it to no grefe if I com to thi barne.
Mak. Nay thou dos me greatt reprefe,[18] and fowll has thou fame.

1 aimed
2 completely
3 boy
4 grabs, clutches
5 hips; see Gen. 49.25; Prov. 11.26
6 happiness
7 MS. was
8 sponsors
9 ready
10 lips
11 lie
12 commotion
13 myself
14 amends
15 very
16 rush, thing
17 MS. there
18 reproach

Daw. The child will it not grefe, that lytyll day-starne.[1]
Mak, with youre leyfe, let me gyf youre barne
Bot vi pence. [*He approaches the cradle.*
Mak. Nay, do way, he slepys.
Daw. Me thynk he pepys.[2]
Mak. When he wakyns, he wepys.
I pray you go hence. [COLL *and* GIB *return.*

Daw. Gyf me lefe hym to kys, and lyft up the clowtt.[3]
[*He sees the sheep.*
What the dewill is this? He has a long snowte.
Coll. He is merkyd[4] amys, we wate ill[5] abowte.
Gib. 'Ill-spon weft,' iwys, 'ay commys foull owte.'
Ay, so!
He is lyke to oure shepe!
Daw. How, Gyb, may I pepe[6]?
Coll. I trow 'Kynde[7] will crepe[8]
Where it may not go.[9]'

Gib. This was a qwantt gawde,[10] and a far[e][11] cast;
It was a hee[12] frawde.
Daw. Yee, syrs, wast.[13]
Lett bren[14] this bawde, and bynd hir fast.
'A fals skawde[15] hang[s] at the last.'
So shall thou.
Wyll ye se how thay swedyll[16]
His foure feytt in the medyll?
Sagh I never in a credyll
A hornyd lad or[17] now.

Mak. Peasse byd I! What, lett be youre fare!
I am he that hym gatt,[18] and yond woman hym bare.

[1] See 553 22
[2] whimpers
[3] cloth
[4] fashioned (marked?)
[5] wait to no purpose
[6] have a look
[7] nature
[8] A proverb; also found in *Everyman*, l. 316
[9] walk
[10] trick
[11] See 538 27
[12] high, deep
[13] was it
[14] burn
[15] scold
[16] swathe, swaddle
[17] before
[18] begot

Coll. What dewill shall he hatt,[1] Mak? Lo, God, Makys[2] ayre[3]!
Gib. Lett be all that, now God gyf hym care,
I sagh.[4]
Gill. A pratty child is he
As syttys on a womans[5] kne,
A dyllydowne,[6] perde,
To gar[7] a man laghe.

Daw. I know hym by the eeremarke—that is a good tokyn.
Mak. I tell you, syrs, hark! Hys noyse[8] was brokyn;
Sythen[9] told me a clark[10] that he was forspokyn.[11]
Coll. This is a fals wark. I wold fayn be wrokyn[12];
Gett wepyn.
Gill. He was takyn with[13] an elfe,
I saw it myself;
When the clok stroke twelf
Was he forshapyn.[14]

Gib. Ye two ar well feft[15] sam[16] in a[17] stede.
Coll.[18] Syn thay manteyn thare theft, let do thaym to dede.[19]
Mak. If I trespas eft, gyrd of[20] my heede;
With you will I be left.[21]
Daw.[22] Syrs, do my reede:
Ffor this trespas
We will nawther ban[23] ne flyte,[24]
Ffyght nor chyte,[25]
Bot have done as tyte,[26]
And cast hym in canvas.
[*They go outside, and toss* MAK *in a sheet.*

1 be called, named
2 Mak's
3 heir
4 say
5 MS. wamans (em. M.)
6 darling
7 make
8 nose
9 since
10 MS. clerk
11 bewitched
12 avenged
13 enchanted by
14 transformed
15 endowed
16 together
17 one
18 MS. iiius pastor (em. M.)
19 death
20 strike off
21 you shall judge
22 MS. primus pastor (em. M.)
23 curse
24 scold
25 chide
26 as quickly as possible

SCENE VII

The fields near Bethlehem of Judea. Enter the Three Shepherds

[*Coll.*[1]] Lord, what I am sore, in poynt for to bryst[2]!
In fayth I may no more; therfor wyll I ryst.[3]
Gib. As a shepe of vii skore[4] he weyd in my fyst.
Ffor to slepe aywhore[5] me thynk that I lyst.
Daw. Now, I pray you,
Lyg downe on this grene.
Coll. On these thefys yit I mene.[6]
Daw. Wherto shuld ye tene[7]?
Do[8] as I say you.

An ANGEL *appears, and sings* Gloria in excelsis.
Then the ANGEL *addresses the shepherds:*[9]

Angel. Ryse, hyrdmen heynd[10]! for now is he borne
That shall take fro the feynd that Adam had lorne[11];
That warloo[12] to sheynd,[13] this nyght is he borne.
God is made youre freynd now at this morne,
He behestys.[14]
At Bedlem go se;
Ther lygys that fre[15]
In a cryb full poorely,
Betwyx two bestys. [*Exit*

Coll. This was a qwant stevyn[16] as[17] ever yit I hard.
It is a mervell to nevyn[18] thus to be skard.[19]
Gib. Of Godys Son of hevyn he spak upward.[20]
All the wod on a levyn[21] me thoght that he gard[22]
Appere.

[1] em. M.
[2] burst
[3] rest
[4] seven score pounds
[5] anywhere
[6] think
[7] trouble
[8] MS. so (em. M.)
[9] MS. Angelus cantat 'Gloria in excelsis,' postea dicat:
[10] gentle
[11] lost
[12] wizard
[13] destroy
[14] promises
[15] noble one
[16] voice
[17] MS. that (em. suggested by M.)
[18] name, speak
[19] frightened
[20] from above
[21] lightning
[22] made

Daw. He spake of a Barne
In Bedlem, I you warne.
Coll. That betokyns yond starne[1]; [*Pointing to the sky.*
Let us seke hym there.

Gib. Say, what was his song? Hard ye not how he crakt[2] it,
Thre brefes[3] to a long?
Daw. Yee, Mary, he hakt[4] it.
Was no crochett wrong, nor no thyng that lakt it.
Coll. Ffor to syng us emong, right as he knakt it,[5]
I can.
Gib. Let se how ye croyne!
Can ye bark at the mone?
Daw. Hold youre tonges! Have done!
Coll. Hark after, than! [*They sing.*

Gib. To Bedlem he bad that we shuld gang;
I am full fard[6] that we tary to lang.
Daw. Be mery and not sad — of myrth is oure sang!
Everlastyng glad[7] to mede[8] may we fang,[9]
Withoutt noyse.
Coll. Hy[10] we theder forthy,[11]
If[12] we be wete and wery,
To that Chyld and that lady;
We have it not to lose.

Gib. We fynde by the prophecy — let be youre dyn! —
Of David and Isay, and mo then I myn,[13]
Thay prophecyed by clergy[14] that in a vyrgyn
Shuld he lyght and ly, to slokyn[15] oure syn
And slake[16] it,

1 nom.
2 trilled (?); MS. crakyd
3 breves (three breves were accounted equal to one long in the music of that period)
4 warbled (?)
5 threw it off
6 afeared
7 gladness
8 for reward
9 receive
10 hie
11 therefore
12 even if
13 remember
14 learning
15 quench
16 slacken, abate

[Save] oure kynde[1] from wo,
Ffor Isay sayd so:
Ecce[2] *virgo*
Concipiet[3] a chylde that is nakyd.

Daw. Ffull glad may we be, and abyde that day,
That Lufly to se, that all myghtys may.[4]
Lord, well were me, for ones and for ay,
Myght I knele on my kne, som word for to say
To that Chylde.
Bot the angell sayd
In a cryb wos he layde,
He was poorly arayd,
Both meke[5] and mylde.

Coll. Patryarkes that has bene, and prophetys beforne,
Thay desyryd to have sene[6] this Chylde that is borne.
Thay ar gone full clene; that have thay lorne.
We shall se hym, I weyn, or it be morne,
To tokyn.[7]
When I se hym and fele,
Then wot I full weyll
It is true as steyll
That prophetys have spokyn:

To so poore as we ar[e] that he wold appere,
Ffyrst fynd, and declare by his messyngere.
Gib. Go we now, let us fare, the place is us nere.
Daw. I am redy and yare,[8] go we in fere[9]
To that Bright.[10]

1 race
2 MS. cite (em. E.)
3 Isa. 7. 14 (Vulgate)
4 has power over all mights
5 MS. mener (em. K.)
6 Matt. 13. 17
7 as a sign
8 prepared
9 together
10 bright one

Lord, if thi wyll[1] be —
We ar lewde[2] all thre —
Thou grauntt us somkyns[3] gle
To comforth thi Wight.[4]

SCENE VIII

Bethlehem. A stable. Enter the Shepherds, and kneel

Coll. Hayll, comly and clene! Hayll, yong Child!
Hayll, Maker, as I meyne, of[5] a madyn so mylde!
Thou has waryd,[6] I weyne, the warlo so wylde;
The fals gyler[7] of teyn,[8] now goys he begylde. —
Lo, he merys,[9]
Lo, he laghys, my Swetyng! —
A wel fare[10] metyng;
I have holden my hetyng.[11] —
Have a bob[12] of cherys.

Gib. Hayll, sufferan[13] Savyoure! Ffor thou has us soght,
Hayll, frely Foyde[14] and Floure, that all thyng has wroght!
Hayll, full of favoure, that made all of noght!
Hayll! I kneyll and I cowre. A byrd have I broght
To my Barne.
Hayll, lytyll tyne[15] Mop[16]!
Of oure crede thou art Crop.[17]
I wold drynk on thy cop,[18]
Lytyll Daystarne.[19]

Daw. Hayll, Derlyng dere, full of godhede!
I pray the be nere when that I have nede.

1 MS. wylles
2 simple, ignorant
3 of some kind
4 creature
5 from
6 cursed
7 beguiler (Satan)
8 of sorrow, sorrowful
9 grows merry
10 very fair
11 promise
12 bunch, cluster
13 sovereign.
14 noble child
15 tiny
16 baby, young creature
17 See Heb. 12. 2
18 from thy cup
19 See 2 Pet. 1. 19; Rev. 22. 16

[Save] oure kynde[1] from wo,
Ffor Isay sayd so:
Ecce[2] *virgo*
Concipiet[3] a chylde that is nakyd.

Daw. Ffull glad may we be, and abyde that day,
That Lufly to se, that all myghtys may.[4]
Lord, well were me, for ones and for ay,
Myght I knele on my kne, som word for to say
To that Chylde.
Bot the angell sayd
In a cryb wos he layde,
He was poorly arayd,
Both meke[5] and mylde.

Coll. Patryarkes that has bene, and prophetys beforne,
Thay desyryd to have sene[6] this Chylde that is borne.
Thay ar gone full clene; that have thay lorne.
We shall se hym, I weyn, or it be morne,
To tokyn.[7]
When I se hym and fele,
Then wot I full weyll
It is true as steyll
That prophetys have spokyn:

To so poore as we ar[e] that he wold appere,
Ffyrst fynd, and declare by his messyngere.
Gib. Go we now, let us fare, the place is us nere.
Daw. I am redy and yare,[8] go we in fere[9]
To that Bright.[10]

[1] race
[2] MS. cite (em. E.)
[3] Isa. 7. 14 (Vulgate)
[4] has power over all mights
[5] MS. mener (em. K.)
[6] Matt. 13. 17
[7] as a sign
[8]
[9] together
[10] bright one

Hayll, swete is thy chere! My hart wold blede
To se the sytt here in so poore wede,
With no pennys.
Hayll! Put furth thy dall[1]!
I bryng the bot a ball;
Have and play the[2] withall,
And go to the tenys.[3]

Mary. The Fader of heven, God omnypotent,
That sett all on seven,[4] his Son has he sent.
My name couth[5] he[6] neven,[7] and lyght[8] or he went.
I conceyvyd hym[9] full even thrugh myght, as he ment,
And now is he borne.
He kepe you fro wo!
I shall pray hym so;
Tell furth as ye go,
And myn[10] on this morne.

Coll. Ffarewell, lady, so fare to beholde,
With thy Chylde on thi kne!
Gib. Bot he lygys full cold.
Lord, well is me; now we go, thou behold.
Daw. Fforsothe, allredy it semys to be told
Full oft.
Coll. What grace we have fun[11]!
Gib. Com furth, now ar we won[12]!
Daw. To syng ar we bun,[13]
Let take on loft.[14] [*They sin*

Explicit Pagina Pastorum.[15]

1 fist, hand
2 rest.
3 tennis (well known in England by the end of the fourteenth century)
4 created all things in seven days (?)
5 did
6 God the Father
7 name
8 alighted, descended (on me)
9 Christ
10 think
11 found
12 rescued, saved
13 bound
14 let us sing aloud
15 Here ends The Shepher[ds'] Pageant

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To se the sytt here in so poore wede,
With no pennys.
Hayll! Put furth thy dall[1]!
I bryng the bot a ball;
Have and play the[2] withall,
And go to the tenys.[3]

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That sett all on seven,[4] his Son has he sent.
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I shall pray hym so;
Tell furth as ye go,
And myn[10] on this morne.

Coll. Ffarewell, lady, so fare to beholde,
With thy Chylde on thi kne!
Gib. Bot he lygys full cold.
Lord, well is me; now we go, thou behold.
Daw. Fforsothe, allredy it semys to be told
Full oft.
Coll. What grace we have fun[11]!
Gib. Com furth, now ar we won[12]!
Daw. To syng ar we bun,[13]
Let take on loft.[14] [*They sing.*

Explicit Pagina Pastorum.[15]

1 fist, hand
2 refl.
3 tennis (well known in England by the end of the fourteenth century)
4 created all things in seven days (?)
5 did
6 God the Father
7 name
8 alighted, descended (on me)
9 Christ
10 think
11 found
12 rescued, saved
13 bound
14 let us sing aloud
15 Here ends The Shepherds' Pageant